

The Constitution

of

Plymouth Association of Wargamers



Compiled from previous versions with updates from minutes of committee meetings and AGM's

As approved by the membership at the March 2014 EGM

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1: Identity of the Association

The club shall be called the Plymouth Association of Wargamers. For the purposes of this document, it shall be referred to as the Association.

2: Aims of the Association

2.1: Statement of Aims

The aim of the Association is to strive for the advancement of wargames and all associated areas of the hobby in a friendly atmosphere.

The Association is intended as a service available to wargamers.

2.2: Achieving the Aims

The Association will provide a meeting place for club members with at least the minimum necessary equipment required for wargaming.

Minimum equipment is here defined as sufficient tables and chairs for the use of the members in the course of wargaming.

3: Membership

3.1: Types of Membership

There shall be two classes of member: Full Members and Associate Members.

3.2: Full Members

3.2.1: Definition of a Full Member

A Full Member is a member who has:

- Agreed to sign an application form.
- Paid all fees due.
- Had his or her name entered into the register of Full Members.
- Been issued with a membership card or had a unique membership number assigned.

3.2.2: Rights of a Full Member

Full Members have the following rights:

- The benefit of club discounts when and where available.
- Eligibility to stand for any post on the committee.
- To vote at the Annual General Meeting of the Association, and at any Extraordinary or other Administrative meetings held by the Association.
- Pay a reduced full members rate for club services where variable fees are charged.

- Where insufficient club equipment is available for all, Full Members have priority over Associated Members.

In addition, where the committee organises trips to weekend conventions for the club as a whole, these may be subsidised from club funds, to a maximum fixed by the committee, whose decision will be based on the recommendations of the Treasurer.

3.2.3: Membership Fees

The Membership Fee will be fixed by the committee, whose decision will be based on the recommendations of the Treasurer, at the end of each calendar year. Once fixed, the rates will apply for the whole of the following calendar year.

There will be three Membership rates:

- **Waged**, for people in full-time employment, who are aged 16 or more.
- **Unwaged**, for students and the unemployed who are aged 16 or more.
- **Junior**, for those under 16 or under 18 and in full-time education. This will usually be half of the Unwaged rate, but may be varied by the committee.

Members who join after the end of June will be charged a reduced fee. This will usually be half of the appropriate rate, but may be varied at the discretion of the Treasurer.

3.3: Associate Members

3.3.1: Definition of an Associate Member

Associate Members are persons attending Association meetings who have not paid a Membership Fee. They have none of the rights of a Full Member, but are under the same obligations while attending Association meetings.

3.4: Duties of Full and Associate Members

All members have the following duties:

- They must obey the rules and conditions imposed by the body leasing the Venue to the Association (the Venue Lessor), with regard to Smoking, etc.
- At the end of each meeting that they attend, they must put away all equipment that they have used. It must be returned to the location it was found in, or to the storage area designated by the Venue Lessor. They will be liable for any damage they cause to property of the Association, or of the Venue Lessor.
- They must leave the venue in a clean and tidy state. Note that this does not preclude the Venue being left in a better state than it was in when the Members entered it that day.
- They must report to a committee member any unlawful activity that occurs at any Association meeting or any issues relating to the child protection policy.
- They must hand in any Lost Property found to a committee member.

3.5: Hall Fees

Each Full or Associate Member will be required to pay a hall fee for each meeting that he or she attends. The hall fee will be fixed by the committee, whose decision will be based on the recommendations of the Treasurer. It can be varied at any time of the year, if deemed necessary by the committee.

There will be two Hall Fee rates:

- The full fee for Associate Members
- A reduced fee for Full Members

In addition, each of these will have a junior rate: this will usually be half of the appropriate rate, but may be varied by the committee at any time.

When open competitions or similar events are being staged where large numbers of Associate Members are expected to attend, the committee may fix a special rate to be paid by all attendees at that meeting.

The fee due for a member's family or others who are non-playing "supporters" may be waived at the discretion of the Treasurer.

4: The Committee

4.1: Structure of the Committee

4.1.1: Committee Posts

The Executive Committee shall consist of five elected members:

- Chairman
- Secretary
- Treasurer
- Events Organiser
- Membership Secretary

The General Committee may also contain any other temporary post required by the Executive Committee.

Members of the Executive Committee will be elected to their posts at the Annual General Meeting, which will usually be held in March, and will serve until the next AGM.

Members of the General Committee will serve at the invitation of, and for a period of time specified by, the Executive Committee.

General Committee Post: Webmaster – All things relating to the Club Website

General Committee Post: Club Organiser – organise in club activities such as tournaments and campaigns and to help administer the web forum

4.1.2: Eligibility for Committee Posts

Only Full Members of the Association are eligible for posts on the Executive Committee. To qualify as a candidate, a Full Member must be nominated by two other Full Members before the nomination deadline date set by the current Committee. Where there are insufficient nominees to fill all of the posts, nominations may be accepted from the floor at the Annual General Meeting.

Previous and current committee members may stand for election to a post provided all other nomination qualifications are met.

Where a person's Membership rights have been revoked as a result of Disciplinary Action, that person may not stand for election, and is not eligible to serve on the Committee until the ban has been lifted by the current, or any succeeding, committee.

4.2: Duties of the Committee Post-Holders

4.2.1: Chairman

The chairman is responsible for organising and chairing:

- Regular meetings of the committee.
- The Annual General Meeting of the Association.
- Where necessary, any Extraordinary or other additional Administrative meeting.
- Enforcing the Health and Safety Policy of the Association.
- Maintenance of the club websites, Facebook pages and other social media

The Chairman must make every effort to be present at every such meeting. It is the Chairman's responsibility to draw up an agenda of relevant topics for the meeting to discuss and resolve. This will usually be based on the minutes of the previous meeting, with new topics inserted at the appropriate points in the meeting order. He must ensure that as far as possible the agenda is followed and that the topics are discussed only for the allotted time and that not too long is spent on any one issue. The Chairman must ensure that every interested committee member has the chance to make any valid points they wish on the subject at the appropriate time. It is also the Chairman's responsibility to ensure that issues are steered towards a resolution by the committee, the Chairman voting last and having the casting vote on decisions.

Where a decision requires action, the Chairman must assign a person to carry it out, and a time-scale in which to achieve results and report to the committee.

Where it is not possible to call a meeting in time to resolve a problem, the Chairman must make any decisions and arrange any actions required.

4.2.2: Secretary

The Secretary is responsible for:

- Taking the minutes of any committee meeting and typing and distributing them to the General Committee and all Full Members.

- Taking the minutes of any Annual General Meeting, Extraordinary or other additional meeting and typing and distributing them to the General Committee, and to any Full Members who request them.
- Maintaining correspondence with other clubs and bodies that interact with the club such as the Venue Lessor, local specialist shops and suppliers.
- Maintaining a register of the names and addresses of current Full Members, using information provided by the Treasurer.
- Co-ordinating the procedures for the nomination and election of Committee Members, and distributing, collecting and counting voting forms at the AGM.
- Maintenance of the club websites, Facebook pages and other social media

Minutes should summarise briefly the main topics discussed by topic heading, indicating decisions and resolutions passed, and who has been assigned to perform which tasks. The minutes should be issued as soon after the meeting as possible, to serve as a reminder to the committee of the actions they are required to carry out.

The minutes will usually form the basis of the agenda for the next meeting. The Chairman will run through them to ensure they are correct, and that all actions have been carried out, adding new topics at the appropriate points in the meeting order.

4.2.3: Treasurer

The Treasurer is responsible for:

- The handling and safekeeping of the Association's funds.
- Maintaining Association account books that should be available at any time for inspection by any of the other Executive Committee members, and on request by any Full Member.
- Attending each committee meeting to advise the committee of the Association's financial situation, and point out the consequences of any proposed expenditure.
- Collecting Hall Fees (and any income from food & drinks) from those who attend each meeting. If he is unable to attend a given meeting, he is responsible for delegating another committee member to the task.
- Collecting Membership Fees from persons wishing to become Full Members, and advising the Secretary of their names and contact addresses.
- Making, or providing Association funds for, any expenditure authorised by the committee.
- Maintaining up to date public liability insurance for club meetings and the annual wargames convention.
- Maintenance of the club websites, Facebook pages and other social media
- Keep a record of assets in the Asset Register and keep it updated

4.2.4: Membership Secretary

The Membership Secretary is responsible for:

- Collecting Membership Fees from persons wishing to become Full Members, and advising the Secretary of their names and contact addresses.
- Rules of Etiquette to be given to all members of the club
- Maintenance of the club website & facebook page.
- Liaison with the treasurer regarding fee income; financial stability and appropriate fee structure for the club.
- Communicating with all members, through mail-shots and newsletters, to inform them of meeting dates, AGM's, conventions, competitions, and similar forthcoming events.
- Maintenance of the club websites, Facebook pages and other social media

4.2.6: Events Organiser

The Events Organiser is responsible for:

- Organising and managing the annual PAW convention
- Recruiting and organising stewards and other staff at Association events, such as conventions and major competitions.
- Arranging and enforcing staff rotas at Association events.
- Supervising work parties involved in such things as setting up tables, or helping Traders or others move goods or equipment into and out of the Association's Venue.
- Enforcing any rules and conditions set by the Association or the Venue Lessor, with regard to smoking, movement or storage of furniture, etc.
- Co-ordinating visits to shows, conventions and competitions. This may simply involve putting drivers with car-spaces in touch with others without transport, or may require arranging and booking transport, accommodation and competition entries.
- Communicating with all members, through email, mail-shots and newsletters; social media and websites to inform them of meeting dates, AGM's, conventions, competitions, and similar forthcoming events.
- Communicating with the wargames press, local media; social media; internet and other relevant bodies, through press releases, emails, newsletters and interviews, to advertise conventions, competitions, and similar forthcoming events, in collaboration with the Secretary.
- Maintenance of the club websites, Facebook pages and other social media

4.2.7: Life Vice President

Non Executive Post : Life Vice President:

This post is open to long standing club members, of good repute, who have spent several years serving on the Committee, who are no longer serving, but who are prepared to act as an oversight to the Committee, to act as arbiters in disputes involving the Committee or unresolved disputes involving club members, and to act as a repository of club wisdom and history.

4.3: Responsibilities of the Committee

The primary responsibilities of the Committee are to maintain the Aims of the Association, and to ensure that the Rules and Regulations of the Association are enforced.

The Committee shall endeavour to meet bi-monthly, and shall undertake to provide, update or replace Association equipment where necessary.

In addition, the Committee is required to organise and run the following events:

- An Annual Wargames Convention, which shall be designed in such a way as to promote all aspects of the hobby to the general public, and to recruit new members to the Association.
- Regular club wargames competitions, in any period and scale combination that has sufficient support amongst the membership.
- Regular trips to conventions and similar events in other parts of the country, where sufficient interest exists amongst the membership.
- Acquiring Assets. At members request the committee can approve the funds to be allocated to buy new assets.

Some or all of these events may be waived for financial reasons, at the discretion of the Committee, whose decision will be based on the recommendations of the Treasurer.

5: Association Rules and Regulations

5:1 Rules

5:1:1 General Rules Summary

- All members shall behave in a responsible and considerate manner when attending Association meetings, or when attending other events as representatives of the Association.
- No member shall take part in any unlawful activity at a meeting of the Association. Any member found to be engaged in any unlawful activity at a meeting of the Association will be ejected immediately.
- The Association reserves the right to refuse entry to its meetings to any person that the Committee deem to be unsuitable.

- Any person requested by any committee member to vacate a meeting of the Association must do so immediately, or legal proceedings may be taken against him or her.

5:1:2 Expected Standards of Conduct

Members will at all times adhere to the following standards of behaviour.

- A Code of Etiquette given by the Membership Secretary to be adhered to
- There will be no verbal or physical abuse of any other member.
- There will be no discrimination of any kind by any member towards any other person at the Association's meetings.

This includes but is not limited to discrimination on grounds of:

- Class
- Ethnic origin, nationality (or statelessness), or race
- Gender
- Age
- Marital or sexual status
- Mental or physical ability
- Political or religious belief.

5:1:3 Health and Safety Policy

It is the responsibility of all persons to ensure that:

- They do not endanger the health and safety of themselves or others.
- They observe the rules established for the safety of those involved in Association's activities. These are defined as required by the Committee, or by the Venue Lessor.

5:2 Regulations

5:2:1 Annual General Meetings

The Association's AGM will normally be held in approximately one month after PAW Convention (normally March) of each year. An AGM must be conducted within approximately one year of the previous AGM. In preparation for this, the current committee must:

Fix a date for the AGM and require the Secretary to publish it so as to give the Membership at least four weeks notice of the date of the meeting.

- Fix a deadline for the receipt of Motions to be placed before the meeting, and require the Secretary to publish it so as to give the Membership **at least** two weeks notice of the date of the deadline. This deadline should be **at least** two weeks before the date of the AGM.

- Fix a date for the AGM and require the Secretary to publish it so as to give the Membership at least four weeks notice of the date of the meeting.
- Require the Secretary to prepare ballot papers listing all eligible candidates and distribute them to those Full Members who are at the meeting.
- Require the secretary to provide membership cards/voting cards so full members at the meeting can be easily recognised at the meeting.
- The membership can request that a formal paper ballot is suspended and elections be carried out by a simple show of hands.
- Proxy voting is to be allowed by either of two ways
 - A club member is nominated to vote on their behalf in accordance with their wishes. A record to be kept for subsequent checking by the member
 - Vote to be Pre-registered with the Chairman on point or points raised in the meeting agenda.

The Secretary must collect the completed ballot papers, count the votes, and announce the results to the meeting as part of the Secretary's Report. Any tied results may be resolved by a show of hands by those Full Members attending.

The minimum number of Full Members that are required to make a meeting quorate is ten, or half of the current number of Full Members, whichever is less.

5:2:2 Extraordinary or Other Additional Meetings

Extraordinary General Meetings may be called by five Full Members, or one quarter of the current number of Full Members, whichever is less. They are subject to the same notice requirements, and must be conducted in the same manner as, Annual General Meetings.

Once called, the Secretary and Chairman must co-operate with the callers with regard to preparation and distribution of an agenda, ballot papers, and etcetera.

5:2:3 Changes to the Constitution

All permanent amendments to this Constitution must come about as a result of a motion or motions placed before an Annual General Meeting or an Extraordinary General Meeting of the Association. Proposed changes must be approved by a **two-thirds majority** of the Full Members present at the meeting to be accepted as revisions of the Constitution.

The committee may make *pro tem* revisions to the Constitution in response to changing situations during the year, but such revisions will lapse at the next Annual General Meeting or Extraordinary General Meeting unless they receive the approval of the meeting.

Once revisions have been accepted by the membership, it is the duty of the Secretary to make an updated version of the Constitution available to the membership within two weeks of the meeting.

5:3 Disciplinary Procedure

If a member behaves in a way which is deemed unacceptable by a Committee Member, or which results in a complaint to the Committee from another member, or a member of the public, Disciplinary Action may be taken.

5:3:1 Invoking the Procedure

Where a complaint of a minor nature is received (noise, swearing, "lucky" dice), then a member of the committee must speak to the culprit and ask them to mend their ways, setting out what is the expected behaviour, and warning them that if they persist further action may be taken. This **Verbal Warning** must be reported to the next committee meeting, as set out in **Section 5:3:2**, below.

Where complaints or allegations of a more serious nature are involved, then the following procedure must be observed:

- At least two committee members must meet with the person complaining, and discuss the issue with them, collecting as much information about the nature and circumstances of the complaint or event as possible. All information gathered needs to be recorded. If there are independent witnesses who confirm the offense at the time of the complaint then they can suspend the member depending upon the severity of the offense.
- The same two committee members must then meet the member complained against, preferably before the next available Association meeting, and inform them that there has been a complaint against them, and that they are suspended pending an investigation. Such suspension will normally be for two meetings, but may be for longer, at the discretion of the committee representatives.
- During the suspension period, the committee must collect as much information about the event or complaint as possible, interviewing other members as well as the original complainant where necessary. The same two members of the committee must also meet with the accused, and present the main points of the complaint to them, giving them an opportunity to answer the allegation. During such investigation, the period of suspension may be extended at the discretion of the committee.
- Having collected as much information as possible, the full Executive Committee must discuss the case (unless committee members must withdraw so as to be available to hear an appeal) and reach a decision on the appropriate action to take at the next available committee meeting, except that if external expert advice is deemed necessary, a decision may be delayed until such advice is available.
- When a decision has been reached, it must be communicated to all parties concerned by the Secretary. The letter will include the main points of the complaint, and the decision of the committee in relation to each point, and what action will be taken as a result of the final decision.

Where the committee upholds a very serious complaint, it may be deemed necessary to inform the entire membership of the resulting decision.

- If there may be a conflict of interest from any of the committee involved then they are to be excused from the investigation and the decision making regarding the case.

In general, Disciplinary Actions arising from this procedure must be selected from those listed in **Section 5:3:2**, below.

5:3:2 Disciplinary Actions

The Disciplinary Actions available to the Committee are:

- **Verbal Warning.** Any Committee Member may give this, without consulting other Committee Members. The cause and content of the verbal warning must be reported to the whole Committee at the next available Committee Meeting, and recorded in the Minutes of that meeting.
- **Written Warning.** This must be administered by the Secretary, at the direction of the Committee, and must result from a majority decision by the Committee. It must clearly set out the reason for the written warning, and must explain the consequences of further infringements.
- **Meeting Ban (Suspension).** This must be notified in writing by the Secretary, at the direction of the Committee, and must result from a majority decision by the Committee. It must clearly set out the number of meetings that the ban will last, the reason for the ban, and the consequences of further infringements.
- **Instant suspension pending further investigation.** There may be times when an instant suspension is appropriate. These circumstances may include: Assault (both physical and verbal), Inappropriate conduct with a minor (either on club premises or off), or other such actions which are liable to bring the Association into disrepute or could have legal repercussions.
- **Withdrawal of Membership.** This must be notified in writing by the Secretary, at the direction of the Committee, and must result from a unanimous decision by the Committee. Once imposed, the banned individual will not be eligible for Membership until the ban is lifted by the unanimous decision of the current or any succeeding committee.

The level of Disciplinary Action imposed shall be at the discretion of the Committee, who will base their decision on the severity of the offence and the previous behaviour record of the member involved.

5:3:3 Disciplinary Appeals Procedure

Where a Disciplinary procedure results in Withdrawal of Membership, the accused may Appeal the decision. The intention to Appeal must normally be communicated in writing to the Secretary within four weeks of the original decision being notified to the accused.

Once the Appeal has been lodged, the following procedure must be observed:

- The Committee must appoint three general committee members not involved in the decision making process or investigation to conduct the appeal. This appointment must be made within a week of the Appeal being lodged.

- The evidence collected during the investigation of the original complaint must be supplied to the Reviewers for their perusal and evaluation.
- The Reviewers must give a ruling on the Appeal within four weeks of the Appeal being lodged: the ruling must be communicated in writing to the Secretary.
- If the ruling of the Reviewers does not support the original Committee decision, then the Committee must re-examine their decision at the next available committee meeting.
- If the Committee find they are unable to modify their original decision in line with the Reviewers ruling, then the Committee must call an Extraordinary General Meeting. The Reviewers must then place a motion before the meeting to modify the original Committee decision in line with their ruling. To succeed, the motion must be approved by a two-thirds majority of the Full Members present at the meeting.

Where the Appeal is not upheld, or a motion to modify the original decision does not succeed at an EGM, then the original decision will continue in force until the ban is lifted by the unanimous decision of the current or any succeeding committee.

5:4 Winding Up Procedure

5:4:1 Introduction

Although it is the intention of the Association to remain in being for long time, situations may arise where it is no longer possible to continue. This might be because of financial pressures, changes to the law of the land, or there being no suitable venue available. Whatever the circumstances, the following procedure must be used.

5:4:2 Procedure

A Winding Up motion must be placed before an Annual General Meeting or an Extraordinary General Meeting of the Association. To succeed, the motion must be approved by a two-thirds majority of the Full Members present at the meeting.

In the event of a successful Winding Up motion at an Annual General Meeting, the current committee will continue without election, except as required to fill vacant posts, and such requirement may be waived by a majority vote of the Full Members present at the meeting.

Following on from a successful Winding Up motion, the committee must arrange for the disposal of the Association's assets, such disposal to be completed within six weeks of the motion being passed.

The disposal of Assets must be carried out in this manner:

- Physical assets such as tables, scenery, rules and reference books must be offered for sale, to the Association's Full Members in the first instance, and then to the wider wargaming community.
- The financial assets, together with the proceeds from the sale of the physical assets, must be used to settle any outstanding debts or liabilities that the Association has, such as venue hire costs.

- Any residue of the financial assets must be divided equally between the current Full Members of the Association.

The meeting that accepts the Winding Up motion may instead choose to transfer the entirety of the assets and liabilities of the Association to another organisation with similar Aims and Objectives.

Such a transfer must be proposed to the meeting by a Full Member, but may be proposed from the floor of the meeting once a Winding Up motion has been accepted. To succeed, the motion must be seconded by another Full member, and approved by a two-thirds majority of the Full Members present at the meeting.

6: Child Protection Policy

6:1 Introduction

Every child or young person, defined as any person under the age of 18, who participates in wargaming activities, should be able to take part in an enjoyable and safe environment and be protected from abuse. This is the responsibility of every adult involved in the wargaming hobby.

The Association recognises its responsibilities to safeguard the welfare of all children and young people by protecting them from physical, sexual or emotional harm and from neglect or bullying. It is determined to meet its obligation to ensure that those activities of the Association that children and young people take part in are organised to the highest possible standard of care.

These procedures apply to anyone involved in the wargaming hobby in whatever capacity. For example, club members, competition umpires and club officials.

The Association will consider, having taken advice, whether anyone who has a previous criminal conviction or caution for offences related to the abuse of children or young people, violence or any sexual offences should be excluded from working with children and young people. This position is re-enforced by U.K. legislation and guidance.

6:2 Procedure

Plymouth Association of Wargamers (PAW) will accept membership of persons under 18. However PAW will not act in loco parentis under any circumstances so any child or young person must attend with their parent or guardian.

On the above basis Declaration & Barring Service checks (DBS formally known as CRB) are not required of any members of PAW because contact with children or young persons is incidental.

For general information additional information is given below.

6:3 What Is Child Abuse?

Child abuse is a term used to describe ways in which children or young people are harmed, usually by adults and increasingly by peers. Often these are people they know and trust. It refers to damage done to a child's or young person's physical, mental or emotional health. Children or young people can be abused within or outside their family, at school, at play

and within any environment such as extra curricular activities, participation with youth organisation and the like. Abusive situations arise when adults or peers misuse their power over children or young people.

Types of abuse:

- **Physical:** where children's bodies are hurt or injured
- **Emotional:** where children do not receive love and affection, may be frightened by Threats or taunts or are given responsibilities beyond their capabilities.
- **Sexual:** where adults (and sometimes other children) use children to satisfy Sexual desires.
- **Neglect:** where adults fail to care for children and protect them from danger, seriously impairing health and development.
- Signs of abuse:
 - The following may indicate abuse, but do not jump to conclusions. There could be other explanations:
 - **Physical:** unexplained or hidden injuries; lack of medical attention.
 - **Emotional:** reverting to younger behaviour, nervousness, sudden underachievement, attention-seeking, running away from home, stealing, lying.
 - **Sexual:** pre-occupation with sexual matters evident in words, play, drawings, being sexually provocative with adults, disturbed sleep, nightmares, bed wetting, secretive relationships with adults and children, stomach pains with no apparent cause.
 - **Neglect:** looking ill-cared for and unhappy, being withdrawn or aggressive, lingering injuries or health problems.

6:4 Bullying

Bullying is not always easy to define; it can take many forms and is usually repeated over a period of time. The three main types are: physical (e.g. hitting, kicking, theft), verbal (e.g. racist or homophobic remarks, threats, name calling) and emotional (e.g. isolating an individual from activities). They will include:

- Deliberate hostility and aggression towards a victim
- A victim who is weaker and less powerful than the bully or bullies
- An outcome that is always painful and distressing for the victim
- Bullying behaviour may also include:
 - Other forms of violence
 - Sarcasm, spreading rumours, persistent teasing
 - Tormenting, ridiculing, humiliation.
 - Racial taunts, graffiti, gestures
 - Unwanted physical contact or abusive or offensive comments of a sexual nature.

Emotional and verbal bullying is more common than physical violence; it can also be difficult to cope with or prove.

Within clubs and schools, the single most important factor in the prevention of bullying is to have a clear policy to which instructors, invigilators, helpers, teachers, club members, children and young people and their parents are fully committed. Therefore, it is of paramount importance that clubs who provide wargaming facilities at whatever level develop their own Anti-Bullying Policy to which club members, the children and their parents all subscribe.

If bullying does occur the Association must take the problem seriously and investigate fully every incident.

Every effort must be made by clubs and organisations to ensure bullying is eradicated. It is important as bullying can result in children or young people becoming vulnerable and isolated. These particular children or young people could then become an easy target for adult abusers.

6:5 General Guidelines in the Care of Children and Young People

It is possible to reduce situations in which abuse can occur and help to protect volunteers, instructors, invigilators and club members by promoting good practice. The following are more specific examples of care, which should be taken when working within your club or organisation.

- Always be public and open when working with children and young people.
- Avoid situations where a teacher/instructor/club members, individual child or young person are completely unobserved.
- Everyone should also be aware that as a general rule it does not make sense to:
- Spend excessive amounts of time alone with a child/young person
- Take children or young people alone on car journeys, however short
- Take children or young people to your home where they will be alone with you.

If cases arise where these situations are unavoidable, they should only occur with the full knowledge and consent of someone in charge in the organisation and/or the child's/young person's parents.

Adults should never:

- Allow or engage in rough, physical or sexually provocative games, including horseplay.
- Share a bedroom with a child or young person
- Allow or engage in any form of inappropriate touching
- Allow children or young people to use inappropriate language unchallenged
- Make sexually suggestive comments to a child or young person, even in fun
- Allow allegations made by a child or young person to go unchallenged, unrecorded or not acted upon

- Do things of a personal nature for children or young people they can do for themselves
- Invite or allow children or young people to visit or stay at your home unsupervised.

It may sometimes be necessary for volunteers to do things of a personal nature for children or young people, particularly if they are very young or have a disability. These tasks should only be carried out with the full understanding and prior consent of parents/ carers and the children and young people involved. There is a need to be responsive to a child's or young person's reactions - if a child or young person is fully dependant upon you, talk with him/her about what you are doing and give choices where possible. This is particularly so if you are involved in any dressing or undressing of outer clothing, or where there is physical contact or lifting or assisting a child or young person to carry out particular activities.

If you accidentally hurt a child or young person, he/she seems distressed in any manner, appears to be sexually aroused by your actions, or misunderstands or misinterprets something you have done, report any such incident as soon as possible to another colleague and make a brief written note of it. Parents or carers should be informed of the incident.

6:6 What to Do if You Suspect or Witness Abuse

The following action should be taken by anyone who has concerns about the welfare of a child or young person in:

- Wargames club meetings or events.
- The home or other settings.

Non-action is not an option in Child Protection

6:7 Concerns About Poor Practice and Possible Abuse.

Child abuse can and does occur outside the family setting. Although it is a sensitive and difficult issue, child abuse may occur within a wide range of social activities. Recent inquiries indicate that abuse that takes place within a public setting is rarely a one-off event. It is crucial that those involved in the wargaming hobby are aware of this possibility and that all allegations are treated seriously and appropriate actions taken.

Allegations may also relate to poor practice where an adult's or peers behaviour is inappropriate and may be causing concern to a young person. Poor practice includes any behaviour that infringes an individual's rights and/or is a failure to fulfil the highest standards of care. Poor practice is unacceptable and should be treated seriously and appropriate actions taken.

Actions to take in abuse cases:

- React calmly so as not to frighten the child or young person.
- Tell the child or young person he/she is not to blame and that he/she was right to tell.
- Take what the child or young person says seriously

- Ensure the safety of the child or young person - if the child or young person needs immediate medical treatment, take the child or young person to hospital or call an ambulance, inform doctors of concerns and ensure that they are aware that this is a Child Protection issue.
- Avoid leading the child or young person and keep any questions to the absolute minimum necessary to ensure a clear understanding of what has been said.
- Re-assure the child or young person but do not make promises of confidentiality or outcome that might not be feasible in the light of subsequent developments.
- Parents and carers should be contacted ONLY after advice from Social Services.
- Make a full record of what has been said heard and/or seen as soon as possible.
- Report concerns to the person in charge or designated person immediately, unless the concern is about the person in charge.

The person in charge should be clearly identified at all times. If the person in charge is not available, or the concern is about the person in charge, then report your concerns directly to the Social Services or the Police. These agencies will advise you whether a formal referral to Social Services is necessary and what further action you might need to take. If you are advised to make a formal referral make it clear to Social Services or the Police that this is a Child Protection referral.

Confidentiality should be maintained on a strictly 'need to know' basis and relevant documents stored in a secure location.

Please remember that it can be more difficult for some children to disclose abuse than for others. Children from ethnic minorities may have regularly experienced racism, which may lead them to believe 'white people', including those in authority roles, do not really care about their well-being. They may feel they have good reason to question whether your response will be any different.

Disabled children and vulnerable adults will have to overcome additional barriers before feeling they can disclose abuse. They may rely on the abuser for their daily care and not know of alternative sources of care or residence. The abuse may be the only attention/affection they have experienced. There may be communication difficulties and they will almost certainly have to overcome prejudices, which block our willingness to believe they may be abused or to use their medical condition to explain away indicators, which in an able bodied child would concern us,

When working with these groups you need to be extra vigilant and give extra thought as to how to respond.

6:8 Recording of Information, Suspicions or Concerns.

Information passed to the Social Services Department or the Police must be helpful as possible and it may be used in any subsequent legal action, hence the necessity for making a detailed record. The report should contain the following information:

- The child's or young person's name, address and date of birth
- The nature of the allegation

- A description of any visible bruising or other injuries
- The child's or young person's account, in their own words if possible, of what has happened and how any bruising or other injuries occurred
- Any observations that have been made by you or to you
- Any times, locations, dates or other relevant information
- A clear distinction between what is fact, opinion or hearsay
- Your knowledge of and relationship to the child or young person

Whenever possible, referrals to Social Services Departments should be confirmed in writing within 24 hours.

Keep a record of the name and designation of the Social Services member of staff or Police Officer to whom, concerns were passed and record the time and date of the call, in case any follow up is needed.

If the allegation is made against an Association member inform the Association as soon as convenient. Contact with the Association on child abuse allegations or issues should be through the Chairman or the Secretary ONLY.

6:9 Further Information

Further information can be obtained from the NSPCC Child Protection Helpline:

Telephone: 0808 800 5000

<https://www.nspcc.org.uk/Applications/Forms/HelplineConcern/the-helpline-online-form.aspx>

help@nspcc.org.uk

For deaf users Textphone 0800 056 0566

These numbers are available 24 hours, are free and completely CONFIDENTIAL.

Police: 08452 777444

Social Services Plymouth 01752 308600 adviceandassessment@plymouth.gov.uk

Plymouth City Council out of hours number: 01752 668000

These guidelines are designed to help you in what is a complex issue. Always remember when working with children and young people common sense prevails!