



## Safer Space Policy

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# Creating Safer Spaces at Camp

Our goal in creating this policy is to ensure you are supported in the complex and, at times, intense work that witchcamp represents. BCWC would like to acknowledge Spiralheart and Paganicon (an organization that helped Spiralheart develop their policy) organizers for creating their Safer Spaces policies from which much of the following policy has been gratefully borrowed!

### The Safer Space Policy will also allow us to:

- Be in compliance with Canadian Law
- Maintain transparency around BCWC Org/Board processes
- Show participants that we take their well-being seriously
- Explicitly state what behavior is, and is not, acceptable at our events
- Ensure that decisions about people who exhibit problematic behavior are made based on formal, documented, complaints and first-hand accounts (as opposed to gossip or rumor)
- Establish a history of recurrent problematic behaviors and/or individuals

We call it a Safer Space Policy (and not a Safe Space Policy) because no group can promise complete safety, and because Witchcamp is supposed to be a container for taking risks *more* safely, not a place that's completely risk free. Our work is magical, and powerful, and we hope attendees will choose to push their growing edges, which can indeed feel risky. Our intent is to ensure that all are able to take those risks in a supportive and compassionate space; a safer space than what the outside world generally provides.



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## PERSONAL RESPONSIBILITY

Building a secure magical container to hold our work is essential —Compassion, Patience, Understanding, and Love. We ask you to help us do this by attending camp in a spirit of Tolerance, and above all, Acceptance.

Celebrate diversity. You're sure to meet people whose spiritual tradition, national origin, race, age, sexual orientation, ability, gender identity, economic situation, physical appearance, and lifestyle differ greatly from your own. We challenge you to think well of others and be curious—no matter the differences that may exist between you.

By attending camp, you agree to abide by the Code of Conduct detailed in the following section of the Safer Space Policy. BC witchcamp ORG reserves the right to eject, and/or ban from future events, any individual found to be in violation of this code.

### Speak up

BCWC is a sober community, and requires that there be no drugs or alcohol at any of its events—including witchcamp. Please respect this by adhering to our drug-free policy throughout the week. If you take prescription medicine, please continue to do so.

If you use cannabis medicinally – we ask that you bring edibles or topical for your personal use only. If you must use vapor or smoke, please notify the org when you register [info@bcwc.ca](mailto:info@bcwc.ca) and we can provide guidance.

## CODE OF CONDUCT

We ask you to be willing to open yourself up to hear feedback without defending or explaining and that you provide feedback with compassion and an understanding that all of us are working toward a culture free of oppression.

If someone's speech or behaviour appear to be disrespectful of a group of people, we ask that you ask questions first as a person's identity is not always apparent and this person may have an affiliation with the group in question. We invite you to do this with compassion and coming from a place of curiosity, rather than accusation. If the idea of



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speaking up seem daunting, please contact an org, community elder, or long-time camper.

### Culture of Enthusiastic Consent

Our goal is to create a culture in which everyone can freely engage in expression of their bodies and sexuality; a culture in which everyone is confident in expressing their boundaries and speaking up when uncomfortable; and a culture in which everyone is respectful of the boundaries expressed by others.

We ask that you seek **Enthusiastic Consent** from sexual partners. “No” means no, “Ummm” means no, “Not right now” means no, “I’m not sure” means no, “I’m uncomfortable” means no. “Yes!” and “Omigods yes!” means yes.

**If you are ever unsure whether your behavior is welcome, STOP and obtain enthusiastic consent before proceeding.**

### Definitions of Unwelcome Behavior

BCWC does not tolerate any form of sexual misbehavior and will take action to either educate or bar violators from its events. The following behaviors are considered inappropriate and unacceptable at BCWC.

### Sexual Misconduct

Sexual assault and rape, stalking, violation of restraining orders, drugging victims with the intent of taking advantage of their incapacitation are unacceptable. *Unwelcome or unwanted:* harassment, lewd comments, sharing or taking of photographs of a sexual/private nature, physical contact/groping, invasion of personal space, and any ongoing sexual pursuit or harassing flirtation. *If it makes a person uncomfortable and the antagonist has been asked to stop already, it is an infringement regardless of actual physical harm.* If it is wanted or welcome, it is not an infringement.



## Physical, Mental & Emotional Abuse

- **Physical**— assault, threats of bodily injury, non-consensual rough play, forcing a person into any physical situation against their will through use of force or threats.
- **Mental/Emotional** – intimidation, harassment, bullying, personal insults specifically designed to make the target feel ill at ease, angry, or sad; racist remarks; the express exclusion of certain people based on gender or sex, sexual orientation, race, belief system, age, or political affiliation from participating in any camp activity (optional offerings, affinity groups, rituals, etc.).

**Please note:** Groups/individuals wishing to organize a camp activity for a specific group of people (e.g. a POC affinity group or femme ritual) are encouraged and welcome to do so, as long as the intent is not to abuse other people.

## COMPLAINT PROCESS

### Filing a Complaint

**As organizers we believe it is our job to create a space that is as safe as possible and to address these kinds of concerns expressed by ritual participants without identifying that person (unless they wish to be identified). This is standard practice at many community events. Our rationale is rooted in the recognition that it isn't always safe enough for a participant who may or may not be part of our community, and who may or may not be a BIPOC person (or a person from other marginalized identities and social locations) to address concerns like these directly.**

BCWC is committed to maintaining camp as a safer space, and responding proactively to all complaints is a part of that. If someone is violating the Code of Conduct, or making you feel uncomfortable in some way, a member of the Complaint Response Team/Org needs to know so that we can take action—even if that action is just to listen. These are the folks to speak with if a behavioral issue comes up during the week. If an incident does occur, and either you or the individual to whom you report the issue, feel that it is problematic enough, they will record a formal complaint.



All formal complaints will be recorded in an area away from others in order to provide privacy and maintain confidentiality. A member of the Response Team/Org will record your complaint including the following details:

- Name of person against whom complaint is being filed
- Complete description of inappropriate behavior with full situational context
- Location, date and time of incident
- Names of anyone who may have witnessed the incident
- Any physical evidence of incidence on complainant

If the complaint involves inappropriate sexual behavior, the Response Team will ask whether the aggressor was asked to stop the behavior. This does not reflect on the credibility of the complainant—we will not engage in victim blaming. Our intent in asking this is to discern whether the aggressor was told that their behavior was *unwanted* and *unwelcome* so that we know whether further education is required. Some people may be unaware of social cues for a variety of reasons (e.g. neurological illness, etc.) or believe “anything goes” at a Pagan event. Therefore we encourage you to communicate when someone is crossing your boundaries, *when you are able to do so*. If the aggressor was aware, or was told, that their behavior was unwanted and unwelcome then it is sexual misconduct (as described above) and should be filed in a formal complaint.

Both the Response Team member and the complainant will sign the complaint. The person against whom the complaint is filed has a right to know what is in the complaint. Complaints will be kept confidential. Confidentiality means that relevant information will only be disclosed to those involved in the investigation and decision making process.

Both complainants and respondents have the right to ask that a member of the Complaint Response Team be appointed to act as an advocate on their behalf. An advocate’s responsibility is to safeguard the interests of the person who has requested their assistance. An advocate is empowered to speak on that person’s behalf and will provide emotional support when appropriate.

### Consequences of Formal Complaints

One of our goals in establishing a formal complaint process is to ensure BCWC can remove persons of concern from our events. It is not our place to judge anyone, or declare them innocent or guilty. But whether we continue to trust a person after reported instances of misconduct and allow them access to our events, putting our participants’ safety in jeopardy, is another matter. It bears repeating that we will not take any action



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based on rumor or gossip, but only on actual first-hand reports of misbehavior. After a formal complaint has been filed, it will be processed in the following manner:

- The Response Team is empowered to assess all complaints. They will determine whether it is the first complaint made against this individual, or whether there have been previous related complaints. They will coordinate and report to the Org.
- They will assess the level of risk to determine if the individual should be immediately ejected from camp, or if it is minor enough not to cause serious harm. Any witnesses to the incident named by the complainant will be sought out for input.
- If the incident is determined to be a minor infraction, the Response Team is empowered to speak with the individual against whom a complaint has been filed (in complete confidentiality). The Response Team will ask for their side of the story, whether their behavior was deemed inappropriate or unwelcome, and assess whether the person can learn from the situation. They may be asked to read the definitions of unwelcome behavior as detailed in our Code of Conduct above. The Response Team will inform the person that their behavior will be monitored going forward and that further violations may lead to ejection from the camp and/or being barred from future events.
- In cases where ejection from camp is a possibility (the behavior is determined to be a clear violation of our Code of Conduct, represented serious threat of physical/mental harm, has recurred in several independent complaints, is confirmed by witnesses, admitted by the perpetrator, etc.) the Response Team will gather as many members of the BCWC board of Organizers as possible who will then use consensus process to make that decision.
- If the board decides to eject an individual from camp, they will be asked to leave immediately. This decision will be recorded in our records.
- Following the event the board/Org will discuss whether the individual will be welcome at future events.
- Confidential records will be maintained by the Response Team and given to the Org at the end of each camp.