

“Be excellent to each other”
- Bill S. Preston, Esq.

VAMPIRE: ELDER KINDRED NETWORK CODE OF ETHICS

Version 1.5

Effective 9 September 2019

INTRODUCTION AND TERMS

The Vampire: Elder Kindred Network (VEKN) is the Official Players’ Organization for the Vampire: The Eternal Struggle (VTES) card game.

The VEKN is dedicated to the continued health of VTES. It encourages the game’s growth in popularity through embracing new players and supporting existing fans. The VEKN sanctions and regulates official VTES tournaments. It also maintains and publishes players’ tournament ratings and rankings.

VEKN Princes are volunteers who promote VTES at the local level, coordinating tournaments and demonstrations.

VEKN National Coordinators have similar roles to Princes, with a broader geographical boundaries and responsibility to approve tournament sanctioning in their region.

Black Chantry Productions (BCP) is the publisher for VTES. BCP was established and is owned by 5 prominent VTES players. In August 2018, BCP accepted a proposal to internalize governance and administration functions from VEKN, resulting in the dissolution of the VEKN Inner Circle leadership group. BCP’s mission includes

- revise existing cards to harmonize terminology and templates;
- develop new cards accepted for use in sanctioned tournament play;
- publish all official VTES cards, current and future (with contracted printing);
- maintain card rulings, card errata, tournament rules and judging guidelines;
- maintain the official player rating system; and
- provide centralized, official fora for communication with the player base; and
- communicate with players through select social media sources.

The VEKN Ethics Committee exists to consider allegations of unethical conduct (as defined in this code) involving members of VEKN. The committee is chaired by BCP’s Organized Play Coordinator.

BCP shall designate three (3) VEKN members to sit on the Ethics Committee and a fourth (4th) VEKN member to act as an alternate for a sitting member as needed. Those members’ terms of service have no specified duration and they may step down at any time.

The National Coordinator responsible for the region of a VEKN member alleged to violate this code shall be accorded equal participation and voting rights on the committee for the duration of an investigation relating to that incident, bringing the total number of individuals reviewing alleged violations to five (5).

Alternate committee membership will be chosen if required e.g. in case of conflict of interest.

PURPOSE AND SCOPE

The purpose of this code of ethics is to describe:

- standards for the conduct of all persons associated with activities and processes overseen by the VEKN;
- procedures by which alleged violations are to be investigated; and
- sanctions for conduct that does not conform to the described standards.
- this document is intended to be used by VEKN members, with a focus on event organisers.

Note on the use of the word “sanction”:

This word has two distinctly different English definitions, both of which are used in this document:

- (1) a threatened penalty for disobeying a law or rule (e.g., “The player received a sanction in response to their violation of the ethics code”);
- (2) official approval or permission (e.g., “this event is officially sanctioned by VEKN”).

There is no direct relationship between this code of ethics and any criminal laws or procedures. The standards, procedures and sanctions concern only rights and privileges of VEKN membership. This includes, but is not limited to:

- the privilege of participating in tournaments and activities as a member of VEKN;
- maintenance of player rating under the VEKN player rating system; and
- access to information and infrastructure associated with VEKN (i.e., VEKN web page and associated fora, VTES-related social media or messaging services administered by VEKN members, etc.)

Every aspect of this code of ethics applies to all participants in activities overseen or sponsored by VEKN. It applies equally regardless of a person’s role within an event structure, organizational position or title within VEKN.

STANDARDS OF CONDUCT

VEKN is dedicated to ensuring player safety and to maintaining the up-standing reputation of sanctioned events.

Judges and the Ethics Committee should have no hesitation in addressing code of ethics violations, regardless of the effect on games in progress or the disruption to local play groups occurring after sanctions are levied.

No response from those bodies could be more damaging than failing to appropriately address incidences of intolerable behaviour from VEKN members.

The actions and behaviour of all persons associated with VEKN activities shall be:

- lawful in the region hosting the activity;
- in accordance with VEKN rules and regulations; and
- consistent with the principles of fair play, good sporting, honesty, and respect for the rights and well-being of others.

The following is a list of examples of actions and behaviour that are considered unethical. It is not intended to be exhaustive. Any action or behaviour that is inconsistent with the principles of fair play, good sporting, honesty, or respect for the rights and well-of others may be considered to fall within the scope of this code of ethics.

- intentionally violating game rules or tournament regulations, particularly after being warned of this infraction at the current, or previous event(s);
- cheating by altering a deck during an event;
- deliberately misrepresenting VTES rules or a current game state;
- colluding to predetermine the winner of a game;
- failing to play to win as defined in VEKN Tournament Rules: Playing to Win, particularly when the intent is to determine the winner of a game;
- participating in a tournament under a false name, or while under suspension;
- significant impairment or incapacity at an event due to alcohol or drug abuse;
- attempting to interfere with the rights or privileges of any VEKN member; such as by barring an active, unsuspended player from entering a sanctioned event;
- submitting a falsified tournament report;
- offering insult, slur, or other language that is derogatory towards an entire class of people based on their race, ethnicity, sex, gender, sexual orientation, disability, class, religion, age, or other self-identified or imputed identity to any person, present or not present, at the event;
- defaming the character of a VEKN member, either by slander or libel;
- making continued social advances towards a player despite clearly demonstrated lack of interest or initial rebuff;
- threatening bodily harm, physically intimidating or assaulting any person in the tournament venue;
- violating federal, state, or local laws while participating in activities that are associated with VEKN.

PROCEDURES

Contact

Please contact orgplay@blackchantry.com

The committee will meet as needed via voice or video application or if the case presents in person.

Submissions can be made electronically, and translation services will be made available where applicable.

Confidentiality

The VEKN Ethics Committee will respect confidentiality requests for the purpose of protecting victims of abuse. At its discretion, it may publicly name a person about whom harassment complaints have been received, or privately warn third parties about them, if the committee believe that doing so will increase the safety of VEKN or the general public. The committee will not name harassment victims without their affirmative consent.

Origination of on-site sanctions

On-site sanctions are reserved for clear, gross code of ethics violations which occur within an event and which merit penalty more severe than disqualification from that single event. Only a head judge may issue an on-site sanction. On-site sanctions must be noted in the tournament report.

The player alleged of violating the code of ethics is immediately disqualified from the current event (see Judges' Guide for disqualification processes) and is suspended from participating in further VEKN-sanctioned events, per VEKN Tournament Rules: Tournament Eligibility. The duration of an on-site sanction is 30 days and applies only to the nation in which it was issued.

The head judge of the event (as defined in the tournament rules) must initiate a review of the sanction with the VEKN Ethics Committee within 5 calendar days of the incident, or its associated suspension is lifted. The judge will detail the circumstances leading to the sanction, recommend a duration based on the infraction's severity and provide a list of witnesses to the incident.

Origination of independently initiated sanctions

The Ethics Committee may also independently initiate review for behaviour observed either inside or outside an event environment. This process should be exceedingly rare, but may be required to address egregious ethics violations occurring outside the purview of sanctioned events.

Review: all sanctions

All sanctions, regardless of origin:

- shall be reviewed by the Ethics Committee within 14 days of receipt;
- are lifted if the Ethics Committee review fails to complete review within 14 days, returning the player to active status;
- require a 3/5ths majority among the reviewers to be upheld;
- if not upheld in review, are lifted and the player is returned to active status.

Any player alleged to have committed an ethics code violation will be interviewed as part of the review process and is allowed to provide their own list of witnesses for discrete incidents.

In cases where a member of the Ethics Committee is under review for alleged misconduct, the alternate committee member shall replace the standing committee member until the Ethics Committee has completed review of all complaints relating to that individual.

If a committee member is otherwise unable to fulfil their obligation to the committee (e.g., due to illness, emergency or any other obligations requiring their attention), the alternate will assume that member's responsibilities until such time as the standing committee member is able to resume their role.

Appeals

There is no appeal process for suspension from VEKN activities. The review and approval described above constitute the entirety of the process associated with suspensions. The determination of the Ethics Committee is final.

SANCTIONS

Sanctions levied by the Ethics Committee are applicable world-wide after being issued. The Ethics Committee will establish a duration for sanction during the review process, considering the referring judge's recommendation and conforming to the limits outlined below.

Sanctions fall within 3 levels of severity:

- Standard suspension: the player is prohibited from participating in further VEKN-sanctioned events while suspended per VEKN Tournament Rules: Tournament Eligibility. The duration of a suspension may range from the remainder of the original 30-day term, up to but not exceeding 18 months from the date of the incident. At the discretion of the Ethic Committee, suspended players may be denied access to all VEKN privileges (including website access) during their suspension.
- Probation: the player retains all VEKN privileges while under probation, including participating in VEKN-sanctioned events. The duration of a probation may not exceed 12 months. Any further ethics code violations with that term lead to a mandatory suspension of the player, with the remaining term of the probation added to the term of the subsequent suspension. A player may be placed on probation only once during their VEKN career.
- Ban: the player is permanently prohibited from participating in further VEKN-sanctioned events. They are removed from the VEKN Player Ratings system and may be denied access to fora and/or websites associated with VEKN activities.

Players subject to sanction will be notified of results at the conclusion of the review process.

Suspended VEKN members forfeit all organizational roles or offices (i.e., Prince, National Coordinator, Playtest Coordinator, Ethics Committee Member, etc.) for a period of time equal to twice the duration of suspension, unless otherwise unanimously determined by the Ethics Committee.

There are no other VEKN-recognized probations, suspensions or bans. Tournament organizers and judges must allow all VEKN registered players in good standing to fairly participate in sanctioned events. Failure to conform to this requirement should be reported to VEKN and may lead to forfeiture of VEKN Prince status, invalidation of tournament results and sanctions as described above against the tournament organizer and/or head judge.

A list of probationary, suspended and banned players is published on the VEKN forums at www.VEKN.net.

ETHICS COMMITTEE MEMBERSHIP

Hugh Angseesing - acting Chair

Other members to be confirmed

REVISION HISTORY

4 July 2018: Version 0.1 [DAK]. Initial proposal for code of ethics, introduces the Ethics Committee, formal review procedures and sanctions.

9 August 2018: Version 0.2 [DAK]. Reflects dissolution of V:EKN Inner Circle, adds BCP introductory comments, alters Ethics Committee membership, changes review voting for sanctions from 2/3 to 3/5.

18 August 2018: Version 0.3 [HA]. Remove extraneous test, typo correction.

20 August 2018: Version 1.0 [DAK]. Release (no changes)

22 August 2018: Version 1.1 [DAK]. Introduces Ethics Committee alternate, describes elevation of alternate reviewer in cases of ethics committee member absence or alleged misconduct.

14 July 2019: Version 1.2 [HA]. Remove extraneous test, typo correction.

1 August 2019: Version 1.3 [HA]. Added feedback from National Coordinators.

25 August 2019: Version 1.4 [HA]. Added feedback from National Coordinators.

9 September 2019: Version 1.5 [HA]. Small change.

LINKS

VEKN TOURNAMENT RULES <http://www.vekn.net/tournament-rules>

SANCTIONED PLAYER LIST

Last updated 14th July 2019

Name	VEKN ID	Country	Sanction Type	Sanction Date	Notes
Mota The Beast	7060666	Brazil	Permanent Ban	2018	Harassment and intimidation of other player(s) at the event including bad and extremely unpleasant behaviour