

Dungeons and Dragons - A Guide for Orkney Library Frances Sinclair (Dungeon Master)

Frances has run and played Dungeons & Dragons for around 20 years, running games for teenagers at a local secondary school. She has some experience of working with pupils with Additional Support Needs (ASD - Asperger's Syndrome, Dyslexia, etc.) She also regularly runs games online using a virtual tabletop and video conferencing.



Dungeons & Dragons is a Tabletop Roleplaying Game where a group of people, ideally 4-6 players, play as adventurers in a fantasy setting. It can be described as 'collaborative storytelling' where a Dungeon Master runs an adventure by providing detail of the setting, play the creatures and NPCs (non-player characters), describe events, actions, places, and landscapes, and provide possible options and outcomes player could choose from. The player plays an imaginary hero. It is the players, through role-playing and dice rolls, who determine the outcome of the story.

In signing up to the games, you, as a player or parent/guardian of a player, consent to the guidelines below.

- **Open to all** - Sessions generally open to all aged 12 and above - beginners are welcome. Experienced players should help those who are less experienced.

Participants with additional support needs are welcome, but this needs to be made known to the DM prior to the game, if the participant wishes, so adjustments can be made if necessary. If the participant requires more support, please could parent or carer remain nearby. If coloured paper is required for character sheets, this needs to be made known at least three days in advance.

- **Respect other players and the DM as well as library users and staff.** This includes allowing other players to get attention from the DM. Avoid talking over players or the DM. Continuous interruption of other players or the DM or confrontational behaviour will result in a warning, then a time-out. Continuation of such disruptive behaviour will result in the player being asked to leave.
- **Family friendly** - Games are, in the main will be family friendly (assume videogame PEGI 12/12A BBFC PG), however, it must be noted fantasy violence in D&D is inherent, using swords, bows, magic, etc, as well as some elements of horror. Keep it clean and suitable for all as the sessions are in a public venue. Roleplaying descriptions of attacks / hits / kills should be toned down. Avoid gender, political, and racial stereotypes, as well as bad language. Please take note of 'Consent/Emotional Bleed' below.
- ***** Consent / Emotional Bleed *****

D&D is a fantasy game that can contain many elements which might feel like they reflect themes going on in the real world and possibly the fears, phobias, and emotions of a player. Depending on the game, these might include, but not limited to: relationships, social / cultural issues (eg. race, gender, politics, mental health, disabilities, and horror). Other than touching on local, in-game cultural conflicts or prejudices, the following are not part of the game: homophobia, racism, sexism, abuse, real world religion, harm to children, gratuitous violence or cruelty. Relationships minimal and will 'fade to black' (keep out of the spotlight).

It is recognised that players' emotions and feelings may be impacted.

Please let the DM/GM know if there is anything that is a complete 'no' for you before the game or if anything comes up during game that you didn't realise was going to be an issue for you. Remember, this is a fantasy game, but we can become really immersed in it.

If there are any themes or content which have left you worried or emotions you have felt, please discuss them with the DM or the other players if you feel able to do so. Beware of 'bleed' where emotions within game can overflow to real life, and vice versa.

- **Publicity** - (Orkney Library) - Sessions are advertised via Social Media. Participants should sign up by phoning the library on 873166. There will be 6 places available, up to a maximum of 8 if it is appropriate to the session.

It may be possible to run more than one group; those on the waiting list will be informed via email 1-2 days prior to the game date.

Photographs may be taken for Orkney Library or other official (eg. Orkney Storytelling Festival) websites, Twitter and Facebook feeds.

NB. Other sessions (eg Orkney Storytelling Festival) may have other booking procedures.

- **COVID (and other virus) Mitigations** - There are no longer legal requirements to wear masks but please feel free to do so if you wish. Social distancing is also no longer a requirement, but please respect other peoples' personal space, especially if they request you do so.
 - Sanitiser will be provided at the table. Therefore, as resources (dice, miniatures, pencils, etc) are loaned by the event leader and Stromness Academy Library, it is expected to be used.
 - Please do not attend if you have any virus symptoms in respect for others.
- **Timing** - Sessions will be 3 - 4 hours, with a 10-20 minute break in the middle. Games will be in the form of a one-shot (single story) but be aware a satisfactory conclusion may not necessarily be attained.
- **DM Style** - Frances is a fairly traditional player who aims to get a balance of role-playing social encounters, combat, and exploration although this does not always go to plan in a D&D session. Shorter sessions will mean the games will be goal driven (with limited choices built in) (eg. Find the stolen item; Rescue the child) rather than wholly open world (sand box). Other DMs may have different styles.
- **Character Creation & Levelling Up** - Character sheets of an appropriate level are provided. However, experienced players may create their own PCs using the following guidelines (please arrive 15 mins earlier so they can be quickly reviewed by the DM). Character sheets **MUST** be printed out.
 - Ability scores - standard array (15, 14, 13, 12, 10, 8) or Point buy. List of point buy stats here: <https://tinyurl.com/DnDPointBuy>
 - Race, class and background from the Player's Handbook (Wizards of the Coast. 2014), Xanathar's Guide to Everything (2017).
 - No evil aligned characters. No murderhobos. (see 'Family Friendly' above)
 - No homebrew characters, feats, spells, etc.
 - Levelling up will be by milestone - usually, but not always, by finishing a quest.
- **Roleplaying** - Don't feel compelled to use a different voice or accent. If you are not comfortable with roleplaying (acting) describe what your character does or says.
- **Resources Required** - If possible, bring your own pencils, eraser, dice, and Player's Handbook if you have one. However, these will be provided including 3-4 copies of the handbook.

House Rules

House rules are those Frances has adapted from the Rules as Written (RAW). They are usually slight alterations. (Other DMs may have different house rules.)

- Communication in combat - speak on own turn, but another PC can respond briefly.
- Potions - can be taken as a bonus action or given to another PC as an action.
- Good roleplaying / creative ideas (without the need for RP) may give advantage on some skill checks.
- On level up when gaining hit points, player can choose to take the average value after rolling.
- Attunement to magic items (for short sessions) - No need to meditate for one hour (in game) to identify a magic item prior to attunement. 1-hour attunement will also allow you to know the properties of the item.

Table Rules

- **Respect** other players and the DM as well as other library users and staff. Limit out of character chat. This includes allowing other players to get attention from the DM. Avoid talking over another player's turn in an encounter or interrupt when they are roleplaying. Don't talk over the DM. Out of turn tactics discussion should be kept to a minimum. Continuous interruption of other players or the DM or confrontational behaviour will result in a warning, then a time-out. Continuation of such disruptive behaviour will result in the player being asked to leave.
- **Dice & Dice Rolls**
 - Wait until DM asks you to roll the dice
 - Roll dice on the table in full view of the DM. Dice which roll off the table must be re-rolled OR (depending on DM) count as a Natural 1 (Critical fail).
 - Dice that land cocked against a book or paper should be re-rolled.
 - Dice that bounce off something will count.
 - Keep play moving
 - Roll both attack (d20) and damage dice at the same time. It makes the action move a bit faster.
 - Average NPC / monster damage usually used by DM to keep action moving.
 - Don't touch other people's dice without permission. Some people don't like it.
 - One roll per outcome. No chain rolls. Another PC can use the Help action, though.
- **Be prepared for your turn** - Pay attention. Plan your next actions before your turn. Take too long, you will be dropped down in the initiative order or even miss your turn (DM's choice).
- **Spell casters** - Know your spells. The DM needs to know range and saving throws.
- Keep personal conflicts away from the table.
- **Character sheet** - Keep accurate track of XP, hit points, spell slot usage, conditions, money, equipment, etc. Use pencil on your sheet.
- **Mobile phones** - Not on the table unless you are using an appropriate app with prior arrangement with the DM. eg. DnDBeyond for spells. Character sheets must be printed out.
- **Rules discussions** - Avoid metagaming, rules lawyering. Accept the DM's ruling. The DM may quickly clarify a rule where possible. Further discussion should wait until the session is finished.
- **Avoid numbers** - You are roleplaying! Don't say "I have 2 hit points left." (Unless you are asked by the DM.) Do say something like "I am / my character is really struggling here", "I drop to my knees", for example.
- Avoid using player knowledge as opposed to character knowledge, known as [metagaming](#). eg. Even if you know about a particular monster, your character might not.
- Have a **spare back-up character** in case the one you are playing dies. If you don't have one, you will be given a pre-generated one. (Spare characters also provided.)
- **Help each other**. Experienced players should help inexperienced ones.

Full [Guidelines and Expectations and house rules](#) are those which the DM use for both in-person, school, and public games.

Orkney Library D&D Games Guidelines: <https://tinyurl.com/DnDOrkLibrary>

BBFC Rating Guide

<https://bbfc.co.uk/sites/default/files/attachments/BBFC-Classification-Guidelines.pdf>