

Bikini Bottom

Moderation Guidelines



Revision 3





Overview

This document serves as a supplement to our rules. It is intended to provide guidelines and advice for our moderation team, and a degree of transparency for any of our users curious about how our team operates internally.

Our server rules can be found here:

<https://bikinibottomdiscord.org/rules>

Introduction

I'd like to firstly say thank you for taking the time out of your day, nearly every day, to continually help make Bikini Bottom safe for all users. It may be hard at times, but please know that your volunteer service is impacting the lives of many individuals. It is with hope that we are model users among them and provide guidance when necessary, and help users interact or mature along the way.

I hope you enjoy our little corner of Discord, and enjoy the time, friends, and activities for which our server holds.

Cheers!

– dovedevic



General Guidelines

Lead by Example

Keep in mind that, as a moderator in Bikini Bottom, you represent our server and our moderation team. Our moderators should strive to be role models both within and outside our community.

Our moderators are not “immune” to the rules, in fact you should hold yourselves to higher standards than you do our users. Users learn how to behave from the community moderators. A toxic moderation team will lead to a toxic community, and a friendly, dedicated moderation team will also be reflected in their community. Strive to be friendly, welcoming, and helpful at all times. When dealing with problem users, be calm and professional.

This does not mean moderators shouldn't be having fun. Our team is encouraged to be active in chat like normal users. In fact, moderators and regular members frequently participating in chat together is a sign of a healthy community.

Ultimately, moderators should strive to be seen fondly by server members, yet respected in their positions of authority. Moderators that fail to enforce rules will be seen as unprofessional or “pushovers” by the server members, while moderators that enforce rules too strictly and/or do not participate in chat will be seen as aloof, aggressive, or out of touch.

Our Job as Moderators

Remember: as moderators, our job isn't simply to mute and ban people. We're caretakers of the community, and as such our actions should at all times reflect what we think is best for our community. This means a few things:



Moderators should use their judgement when enforcing rules. The rules are not infallible, make sure you don't become "trigger happy". Sometimes moderator intervention isn't necessary. Sometimes the "intervention" is just a message in chat intended to de-escalate a heated argument.

Don't be afraid to take action when you see problematic behavior. Again, the rules aren't infallible. Just because there's not an explicit rule against something doesn't mean you're not allowed to take steps to stop it.

Sometimes, you'll encounter users who clearly only intend to cause problems. Perhaps someone is trying to "rule lawyer" their way out of a mute when they've been causing trouble in chat all day. Maybe they just joined and have already started to spam controversial messages in chat. Unfortunately, sometimes you'll have to forego progressive discipline and act in what you feel is the best interest of our community. As a member of our team, you have the authority to do this when necessary. Don't doubt your judgement, and if any users complain about your actions as a moderator, you're welcome to direct them to one of our server administrators.

We're a Team

None of us are perfect. We all have moments when we doubt ourselves or realize we made a mistake. Don't be afraid to admit your mistakes, or to ask for help from other moderators. We're all here to help each other.

Sometimes you need to take a break. If you're feeling burned out moderating the server, let us know. We've all had points where we feel tired of moderating, and just need to step away for a bit.

If you have any concerns about any aspect of how our team operates, you're welcome to reach out to one of our administrators. This includes any concerns about other members of our team.



Moderation Guide

Tools and Infractions

Let's start by addressing the actions we have available as moderators. For this, a general system of infraction escalation is laid out below:

1. Formal or informal warning
2. 1 to 6 hour mute
3. 12 to 24 hour mute
4. 3 day to 1 week mute
5. Permanent mute or community ban

Note that these steps intentionally leave room for adjustment based on the situation. We trust our moderators to take the steps they deem appropriate to handle rule violations. The following aspects of our moderation system are often left to moderator discretion:

Formal or informal warning: When possible, we encourage our moderators to handle a situation “off the record”, such as asking a user to move channels or stop spamming. A formal warning with Ouranos should be used when a user’s rule violation should be seen by other moderators in the case that they continue to break our rules.

Mute duration: Mute duration is left up to moderator discretion, although our progression system outlines recommended durations relative to the severity of the other actions. For example, if a user was muted for 6 hours for spam, then continues to spam in chat, bumping the mute up to 12 hours the next time would be a good idea.

Permanent mute vs. community ban: These two actions have the same effective result in that a user is unable to participate in our community. However, a ban will be more effective since it also



prevents the user from contacting any of our members via DM and IP bans them from our server. With this in mind, you should aim to favor a ban when we want these two additional features. Generally, when infractions get this far, we ban the user.

Starting infraction “level”: Our infraction system doesn’t strictly specify what actions are linked to which moderation actions (recommendations are provided in this document, however). This is so, based on the individual situation, our moderators can escalate an infraction as they see fit. In general, continued behavior should result in an increase in the severity of our response.

Rules

Here’s an outline of our community’s rules:

- **Rule 1:** Adherence to Discord TOS
- **Rule 2:** Adherence to a fully SFW community
- **Rule 3:** Harassment and trolling
- **Rule 4:** Inappropriate user profiles
- **Rule 5:** Chat coherence and stability
- **Rule 6:** Anti-spam
- **Rule 7:** Anti-voice-spam
- **Rule 8:** Role mentions
- **Rule 9:** Advertisement
- **Rule 10:** Moderator Discretion

A more in-depth breakdown of our rules can be found here: <https://bikinibottomdiscord.org/rules>

When handling rule breakers, please remember to:

- Try to use a warning (formal or informal) where possible. Only act immediately when it is necessary to get things under control.
- Add a reason to your actions. This is important so the rest of the team can see what happened.
- Use your discretion. The provided **punishments** below are just recommendations to keep things consistent across the team.



Rule 1: Adherence to Discord TOS

We must abide by and enforce Discord's [ToS](#) and [Community Guidelines](#). For us, these are the main things to pick out:

- Users must be 13 years old or older; no exceptions.
- Users must not distribute virus files, malware, or exploits through the service.

If a user is found to be breaking the ToS or Community Guidelines, we are required to **ban and report** the user to Discord.

Rule 2: NSFW Content

Our server does not contain any NSFW channels, and as such absolutely no NSFW content is allowed to be posted.

- Nudity, porn, pedophilic, or gore content: **ban and report**
- Lewd or sexually suggestive content, sexual roleplaying, or suggestive audio content: **12-24 hour mute or ban**
- Non-sexual forms of NSFW/disturbing content: **3-6 hour mute**

This is in no way exhaustive, and there can be instances of NSFW content that does not involve one of the above. For these, apply your best judgement.

Rule 3: Harassment and trolling

General bullying/harassment guidelines:

- Encouraging self-harm or suicide: **ban and report**
- Racism, sexism, other "-isms": **ban**
- Trolling: **6-12 hour mute**
- Heated argument: **1-3 hour mute**

Racial or other slurs: No action necessary if caught by the filter. If the user is spamming the filter (or getting around the filter), the user should be **banned**.



One important thing to note is that we *moderate where we can*. If we get a report that an individual is harassing a user in another server or in DM, we should instruct the user to block the harasser and report them to Discord if they see fit. * See Rules 1 and 9 for exceptions to this.

Rule 4: Inappropriate user profiles

Users should not have any NSFW, disturbing, or excessively offensive content in their profiles. This includes their username, nickname, profile picture, and custom status.

Inappropriate content found in a user's profile should be treated the same way that such content would be treated if it were sent in one of our channels. * See Rules 2 and 3 for more information.

Rule 5: Chat coherence and stability

This rule mainly aims at keeping our chats engaging and friendly. If a user is actively trying to derail or interrupt a conversation, **warn first, and mute if necessary**. This includes when moderator intervention has occurred, and the offenders were told to “stop bringing it up”.

Rule 6: Spam

Spam can be defined as unwanted or repeated nonsensical messages, bot commands, pings, copy-pastas, and images. Outside #chum-bucket, any spam should result in a **warning, and a 1-6 hour mute if necessary**. On note of #chum-bucket, even though it is our spam channel, we should attempt to keep the spam at a minimum as our new users join there, some bot commands exclusively work there, and other legitimate activity resides there. If spam in #chum-bucket become excessive or disruptive, treat it as you would in any other channel.



Rule 7: Voice-spam

Voice spam can be defined as loud, intrusive, disorienting, or unwanted noises in our voice chats. If a trouble user joins the session and spams (using their mic or the Rythm bot), **mute for 1-6 hours** as you would with spam in chat.

Rule 8: Abusing mentions

Users should refrain from unnecessarily mentioning other users or server moderators in chat. If a user is pinging another user repeatedly for no reason, apply a **1-6 hour mute** as you would with spam.

The @Moderator role ping should only be used in cases where moderator intervention is needed but no mods appear to be available. If this tag is used repeatedly without any apparent reason, **mute for 12-24 hours**.

Rule 9: Advertisement

Our bots actively remove server invites that are not a part of our community, sponsorships, or partnerships. No action is needed if the bot picks it out. As with our censor, however, if a user is spamming or bypassing our advertisement filter, take appropriate action to stop it.

However, if the user is sending server invites via DM *unsolicited* then the user should be **banned**, and the victim should be encouraged to report this to Discord.

Regarding self-promotion, services such as YouTube, Twitch, Twitter, Facebook, Instagram, Snapchat, and other social media advertisement is not allowed in our server. Blatant self-promotion should result in a **1-6 hour mute**.



Rule 10: Moderator Discretion

Oh boy, grey areas. Moderation is an inexact science, so much is left up to our own discretion. In your time on our team, you will inevitably encounter “rule lawyers” who try to bend the rules or exploit grey areas in their favor. This rule is intended as a catch-all for handling these situations, as well as handling anything our moderators deem inappropriate for our community.

In general, there will be many times where someone does something that is not covered above. Use your judgement on the action necessary and cite rule 10 if asked. If you have a question or are unsure, ask. If you are alone, we trust your judgement.

As mods we always ask our users to keep the human in mind, but we should follow that as well. A troll is a troll, sure, but behind the screen is a human. We should always treat others with respect, calm, and level-headedness while we consider the other side with our positions.

Things to Note

Remember that you are human and can err. That is okay, and it will happen. When we make a mistake, consider it *our* mistake and not *yours*. Don't fret much about how others will view it, as these things tend to fade away in people's minds anyways.

Additionally, we are not licensed psychiatrists. When a distressed user comes your way, attempt to provide help to them using any of the public resources found online. If the user shows signs of suicidal thoughts, please immediately forward them the National Suicide Prevention Lifeline phone number (more info in [?tag suicide](#)).



Conclusion

Moderation is an interesting thing. We're volunteers working a thankless, often stressful job. I wanted to take a moment to let you know that your efforts are noticed and appreciated.

Remember, this is *our* community. Bikini Bottom's success is due to years of love and care by our moderators. I hope being on this team is as rewarding an experience for you as it has been for me. It's been an absolute honor to work with each and every one of you in my two years here.

On behalf of Bikini Bottom, thank you for everything you do, and stay awesome!

- nwunder



Changelog

Revision 2 (8/6/20 by nwunder, dovedevic):

- Replaced outdated parts of rules (references to Let's Watch as well as removing redundant Ban Evasion rule) * Ban evasion is already a ToS violation
- Added Rule 4: Inappropriate content in user profiles
- Added extensions/clarifications to several existing rules (1, 2, 3, 5, 6, 7, 8, 10)
* These are primarily changes to the wording of #server-rules
- Formatting, phrasing, conciseness

Revision 3 (6/11/2021 by nwunder, dovedevic)

- Updated breakdown of tools and infractions
- Put notes from dove all together as an intro
- Complete rework of infractions system, removed unnecessary level system
- Rewrote individual rules sections
- Highlighted relevant action for each rule to make lookups easier
- Added General Guidelines section
- Added conclusion note
- Formatting, phrasing, conciseness