

Fredericton Swing Dance Code of Conduct

(Safer Spaces Policy and Guide to Being a Respectful Dancer)

Safer Spaces Policy

By attending activities associated with Fredericton Swing Dance (the “club”), I am agreeing to abide by this policy. If not, consequences could range from removal from classes, up to and including law enforcement involvement (for serious offences).

- **I am expected to comply with our safer spaces policy.**
- **I should ensure others feel safe around me at all times. I am encouraged to bring concerns to Officials.**
- **All reports will be taken seriously.**
- **I will respect everyone, no matter what. I will not harass.**
- **I will be mindful of how others might perceive my behaviour and ensure it is always respectful of physical and verbal boundaries.**
- **I am here to dance, not to speed date.**
- **I will respect others and my partner on the dance floor by not engaging in any sexual behaviour.**
- **I am aware I must follow all applicable laws and any venue rules.**
- **I will use common sense**

I realize if I do something inappropriate, whether or not it is explicitly mentioned in this policy, there may be consequences. These consequences may include Officials talking with me about my behaviour, temporary or permanent ejection from events or classes without a refund, removal of powers, privileges, or roles within the club, being banned from future activities and/or legal action.

If I experience or witness any behaviour that is inappropriate or makes someone feel uncomfortable, I am encouraged to bring it to an Official’s attention, even if this involves an Official. In return, the Club will treat my concerns with respect and seriousness, and take action to make sure my concerns are addressed.

I will respect everyone at Club activities, regardless of their age, race, religion, nationality, creed, sex, gender expression, sexual orientation, weight, ability, dance skill, politics, lifestyle, dance role, and personal boundaries. I will not harass anyone or use misogynist, homophobic, transphobic, ableist, or racist language. Harassment includes offensive verbal comments, sexual images in public spaces, deliberate intimidation, stalking, harassing photography or recording, sustained disruption of workshops or other events, inappropriate physical contact, and unwelcome sexual attention, among other potentially unwanted behaviours.

I will strictly respect the physical and personal boundaries of my fellow attendees on and off the dance floor. I realize that I can make others uncomfortable even without intending to, which is

why I will always ask for permission from others before dancing, touching, hugging, cuddling, or other seemingly innocent forms of physical contact. I realize that only a verbal “yes” means “yes”, even when asking someone for a dance.

The club does not exist as a pool of people for me to hit on. I understand that I will likely make friends, or even form closer relationships with fellow dancers, but that I am here first and foremost for dance. I understand the difference between expressing my sexuality through dance and engaging in sexual behaviour (including but not limited to masturbation, groping, humping, heavy petting, oral sex, and sexual intercourse) while dancing. I will NEVER engage in sexual behaviour on the dance floor out of consideration of my partner and everyone else present.

I will not use my experience, role, or position with the club in a coercive, abusive, or generally negative way that may be detrimental to the health of the swing scene and club.

I realize that my number one responsibility during any dance is to make sure that my partner, myself, and those around me are safe and comfortable. I will do my best to make sure that my dancing does not cause anyone else any injury or discomfort. If I do accidentally cause someone else injury or discomfort, I will apologize immediately.

I will obey all applicable laws. I will follow the rules of venues and any requests made by Officials. I realize that, as a participant in Club activities, my actions, positive or negative, have the potential to impact swing events and the Club's future.

I realize that this policy cannot and does not outline every type of acceptable or unacceptable behaviour or resulting consequences. In the end, I will use common sense, treat others the way they would like to be treated, respect the decisions of the Officials, and accept any consequences of my actions.

Guide to Being a Respectful Dancer

I will aspire to be the most awesome and best version of myself while attending any Fredericton Swing Dance activities. To be the most awesome and best version of myself, I will do the following:

- **I will be inclusive, yet acknowledge that I, and others, do not have to partake in every dance and may say no (or be said no to).**
- **I will not be critical of others' dancing or offer unsolicited advice, unless our dancing is causing me discomfort or pain.**
- **I will leave aeriels for jam circles and performances only and never on the social dance floor. I will always be safe with my aeriels.**
- **I will be careful of floor craft and share the dance floor.**
- **I will be clean, hygienic, and dressed appropriately for dancing.**
- **I will be a respectful guest at all venues.**

- I will be a great and appreciative guest at hosts' houses.
- I am responsible for my own belongings.

Dance Etiquette

I will not take myself too seriously, which means I will do things like happily dance with people of various skill levels, or accept if someone does not want to dance with me, or be 100% okay if I don't make finals at any competition where I might be participating.

I will ask someone for a second dance if I really enjoyed myself; however, I will dance with other people after that so that I can give my partner the opportunity to dance with someone else. As much as I may love dancing with that one person, I know dancing with a variety of partners is good for developing our dance skills, and I don't want to take that away from my partner or myself.

I am aware of the many legitimate reasons to decline to dance with someone. I will not decline to dance with someone for a mean or judgmental reason, because I have promised to be the most awesome version of myself. I will be grateful for a dance even if my partner wants to stop before the song ends, for whatever reason as to why they may wish to halt the dance. *I recognize that my partner may end a dance due to reasons unrelated to whatever I may have done; however, if I did something to contribute to the dance ending early, I will apologize to my partner, make sure that they are okay, and learn from that experience to become an even better dance partner.*

I will never critique someone's dancing on the social floor or during classes UNLESS:

- a. My partner EXPLICITLY asked for feedback during this dance, or
- b. My partner is causing me some kind of physical or psychological discomfort.

If my partner is causing me some kind of physical or psychological discomfort, I am encouraged to tell them because it may help me, my partner, and all the other dancers to discontinue this behaviour. I am encouraged to stop the dance, politely and constructively mention my discomfort to my partner, and, if I feel comfortable doing so, offer a possible solution. If such an incident occurs in class, I am encouraged to ask for help from an instructor to help correct the issue.

If my partner mentions that I am causing them discomfort, I will not be offended or defensive – instead, I will be grateful that they are helping to make me more fun and safe to dance with.

I will practice safe floor-craft and apologize if I accidentally bump another person. If it is a serious collision, I will make sure others are alright before continuing to dance. I will adjust my dancing to make sure that I'm always in control and not likely to hurt anyone, especially when the floor is crowded, the music is fast, I'm REALLY EXCITED ABOUT THIS SONG, I'm tired, or I have been drinking alcoholic beverages. If I consume alcohol before or during a Club activity, I

will do so responsibly, and, if I am drunk enough to pose a risk to myself or others, I will leave the dance floor and retire to the bar.

I realize that good hygiene is really important to help my dance partners to have a comfortable and enjoyable experience. I will keep my clothes, mouth, and body clean and low-odour throughout Club activities. I realize that everyone has different standards of hygiene, so, when in doubt, I will change my shirt, towel off, grab a breath mint, or otherwise freshen myself up. When I am sick, I will keep my germs to myself.

I will be considerate when choosing clothing, footwear, accessories, and hairstyles. I will not wear anything that is potentially hazardous to myself or to others on the dance floor (for example, overly loose clothing, thin straps, stiletto heels, or heavy accessories).

I will be supportive of everyone's dancing and learning, and do everything I can to make this an enjoyable and welcoming place for dancers in, and outside of, the Fredericton community.

Being an Awesome Guest at Venues

I realize that I am a guest and I will be respectful in following all of the rules and regulations of every venue. I understand that no alcohol is permitted during classes. I will respect the alcohol policy at different venues. I will respect our hosts and their neighbours by being quiet when entering and leaving venues. I will also clean up after myself at all of the venues I attend.

Being An Awesome Guest At My Host's

I realize that, to an extent, I am representing the Club at events both in and outside of Fredericton. I will strive to leave a good impression of myself, the Club, and Fredericton as a whole.

I will be respectful and considerate to my hosts. I appreciate that they are opening their home to me, for free, so that dancing can be more affordable for all. This means that I will do things like clean up after myself, be considerate of my noise level, not monopolise space, respect my host's house rules, and deeply and sincerely thank my host for their hospitality. I will also be incredibly considerate towards any other guests at my host's place of residence.

I realize that not being an awesome guest means that people may not wish to host dancers again, which can seriously harm future dance events.

Guidelines for Awesome Aerials

These guidelines are to help ensure that aerials are enjoyed by all, and not feared and hated. I understand that aerials, if done incorrectly, can lead to injury to myself, my partner, and others. I understand that doing aerials must be treated with all seriousness each and every time.

I will only do aerials in jam circles and performances, where they are prepared and there is sufficient space, and not on the social dance floor. I will ensure there is sufficient space to not only start, but finish our aerial. What goes up must come down, and the space must still be clear at the end of the aerial to ensure everyone's safety. If in doubt, I will refrain, because that's the safe thing to do.

I will only do aerials I have practiced, and only with the partner I have practiced that aerial with. Even if I know the same aerial as someone else, I understand that they may do it differently (timing, lead, etc.), and that aerials will work differently with different people, because everyone is unique.

I will learn aerials safely, using spotters and mats if appropriate. I will start with a warm up, break it down, learn it in stages, and think through aerials and potential hazards and missteps before trying new moves. We will seek out any necessary help, instruction, and guidance. As a spotter, I will always be ready for action, thinking "how might this go wrong, and where will I be needed?". I will observe with hands ready, not touching until needed, and focusing on protecting the head first.

I will get verbal confirmation from my partner before beginning an aerial, and also know and use non-verbal leads. For example, one of us could say the aerial name aloud and the other will repeat it back. If in doubt, we will abort.

My outfit will be appropriate and safe for doing any aerials I plan to do. I will make sure not to have any jewellery, items in my pocket, or parts of clothing that can poke, scratch, hit, get tangled with, or otherwise hurt my partner or myself.

Knowing that we may be watched by beginner dancers, I will be mindful to follow this guideline not just for myself, but to exhibit good, safe practices, and be a great role model.

For the sake of this guideline, "aerials" includes airsteps, lifts, drops, etc; anything that involves one partner not being responsible for their own weight, or anything involving feet above waist level.

Disclaimer

The club is not responsible for lost or stolen items.

Our Responsibilities to Dancers, Participants and Guests

- **We encourage you to tell us when something inappropriate or abusive happens to you or someone else, whether directly or through a friend**
- **We will respect your privacy and keep your reports confidential, with some limits**
- **We are here for you!**

We, the Club Officials, encourage anyone who has experienced or witnessed intimidating or inappropriate behaviour to tell an Official. This includes verbal, physical, psychological, sexually inappropriate, or abusive behaviours. We will treat any reports made, from dancers in our home scene or elsewhere, with sensitivity and will keep all details as confidential as possible. (In the event of a police investigation, all information will become disclosable.)

Your suggested point of contact is our Safety and Inclusion Officers who can be reached at swingdance.safety1@gmail.com. If you prefer to talk in person with someone regarding an incident or a concern, or would prefer to speak to another Official, you are welcome to do so at any time of your choosing, including at our classes or events throughout the year.

Although we welcome direct reporting, we understand that situations may occur where you may not feel comfortable directly approaching an Official. If you'd rather speak to someone outside of our immediate group, we recommend you speak with a trusted friend who can advocate for you on your behalf.

Officials are available for discussion and reassurance about a range of dance-related topics, not just formal reports – please do tell us about your concerns, even small ones – we're here for you!

Code of Conduct adapted from the following sources, which we recommend for further reading:
<http://safetyinwingdance.com/sistercode/>
<http://disruptingdinnerparties.com/2015/02/04/the-problem-of-power-sarah-sullivan-steven-mitchell-and-building-better-communities/>
<http://steelcitybluesfestival.com/about/policies/>
<https://mobtownballroom.com/code>