

# Mission City Swing Code of Conduct

December 2017

Mission City Swing aspires to create a safe, welcoming, and inclusive environment for those who enjoy West Coast Swing. We want everyone to feel comfortable, accepted, and supported, regardless of age, gender, sexual orientation, physical appearance, ability, ethnicity, religion, nationality, or other personal circumstance.

Our community aspires to live by certain values and principles:

- **Respect and compassion.** Everyone deserves to be acknowledged and treated with dignity and kindness. We accept others for who they are and we are responsive to others' needs, desires, opinions, and preferences.
- **Diversity and inclusion.** We welcome anyone and everyone who is interested in joining our community. We celebrate diversity and we appreciate the value of bringing different people together for a shared purpose.
- **Safety and comfort.** We seek to ensure that everyone feels secure and at ease in our community. We work to create a supportive and nurturing environment and to prevent physical, emotional, or psychological injury and abuse of any kind.
- **Community and citizenship.** We value relationships and connecting with others, a sense of fellowship and camaraderie, and supporting one another to achieve our goals. We believe that each of us has a part to play in creating, shaping, and sustaining our community.

To ensure that everyone has fun in our community, we have outlined a set of norms and behaviors for people to follow, and we describe what may happen should someone violate any of these. We reserve the right to remove or ban anyone from Mission City Swing who does not abide by this Code of Conduct.

## Social etiquette

You always have the right to choose who you dance with, what songs you dance to, and what role you dance. If you would like to dance with someone, it is appropriate to ask them if they would like to dance, providing them with the option of accepting or declining.

People usually happily accept an invitation to dance, but it is also acceptable to politely decline an invitation. If you decline an invitation to dance, it is impolite to then dance with someone else for that same song.

If someone declines your invitation to dance, please respect their decision and find someone else to dance with instead. If someone refuses several invitations to dance, stop asking and leave them be.

A good partner is generous and kind, and it is polite to thank your partner after a dance. However, never offer unsolicited advice, instruction, criticism, or any comments about physical appearance.

**Safety**

Please be mindful of other dancers around you to avoid accidental collisions and potential injuries, especially when the dance floor is crowded. If you bump into someone, apologize and check to see if they are hurt. If anyone near you falls or is injured, please offer immediate assistance and check if they are okay. If someone needs medical attention, contact a member of our staff immediately.

Any movement that increases the risk of hurting your partner (or other dancers) makes for unsafe dancing. We all enjoy trying new patterns and movements, but always be careful with your partner. Avoid forceful movements that could cause an injury by yanking or jerking your partner, or making your partner move before they are ready. Avoid lifts, drops, or other dramatic weight-supported moves that your partner may not be prepared for. You never know when someone might be nursing or recovering from an injury. If you have an injury that may limit your movements, you should inform your partner before you begin dancing.

Just because someone does something with someone else does not mean they are comfortable doing the same thing with you. We all have different comfort levels with different partners and you should respect each individual's boundaries. If you are unsure of someone's boundaries, then ask them. If you misjudge and they ask you to stop, either verbally or nonverbally (such as with a facial expression or a body language cue), then stop and do not try it again with that person.

If at any point in a dance your partner makes you feel uncomfortable, touches you inappropriately, or hurts you, it is okay to say "no" or "stop." You can tell your partner that you are uncomfortable or ask for any adjustments you need. Requests for your own safety and comfort are respectful of your partner in creating fun for everyone, and are not the same as offering someone instruction or unsolicited feedback on their dance skills. If you are often the recipient of these kinds of requests for adjustments, you should consider reaching out to a teacher for help. If you are often uncomfortable in dances, please consider reaching out to a trusted ally for help.

*You also have the right to stop dancing in the middle of a song with anyone who mistreats you or ignores your wishes. You do not have to give a reason. If someone asks to stop dancing, honor their request and move on.*

**Unacceptable behavior**

We do not tolerate harassment or abuse of any kind. The reason does not matter - such behavior is unacceptable.

Any behavior which makes another person feel unsafe or uncomfortable to the point of being unable to enjoy their experience at Mission City Swing can be considered harassment. This includes any offensive comments, verbal abuse, hostile electronic communications, sexual propositions, unwelcome photography or videography, displays of sexual imagery, unwanted or inappropriate physical contact, physical intimidation, stalking, or disruption of classes. Actions that compromise the safe and respectful environment of this venue are not acceptable from any member of our community, whether they be attendees, teachers, judges, volunteers, organizers, or staff.

Anyone asked to stop unacceptable or harassing behavior is expected to do so immediately. Depending on the severity, staff may intervene in response to a problem, ranging from talking to the offending person and asking them to do or not do something to asking them to leave the venue immediately without warning, compensation, or refund.

If you experience harassment at Mission City Swing, or notice someone else being harassed, please contact one of our staff right away, so we can help put a stop to it. You can find MCS staff on duty at the front desk, or at the DJ booth when registration is closed, or you can directly call or contact Eric at the information below. We promise to listen and to treat you with respect and confidentiality.

Please watch out for each other and help us to take care of you. If you aren't sure if someone else is okay, please take a closer look: ask them for a dance to draw them away from the situation, or ask, in a friendly way, if they need help. If you see additional problems after you or someone else spoke with us about an issue, we want to hear about them too. We appreciate your help keeping us informed so we can address any issues that detract from attendees' comfort, safety, and enjoyment.

### **Good citizenship**

- *Be inclusive.* Dance with lots of different people of different skill levels. If you decline dances think about why. Try to be inclusive and dance with people who you do not ordinarily dance with, especially new dancers and dancers new to the community...
- *Be welcoming.* Be nice to new people, both beginners and visiting dancers. Engage them in conversation and make them feel like part of the community.
- *Be a model.* Be the kind of person you want others to be to you. Demonstrate the kind of behavior you want others to follow.
- *Be alert.* Please keep an eye out for any suspicious or unacceptable behavior. Help your fellow dancers and alert MCS staff should any issues arise.
- *Be hygienic.* We know dance makes people feel better, but please stay home if you are sick. Be sure to wash your hands throughout the night to avoid the spread of germs.
- *Be considerate.* If you sweat a lot, bring extra shirts and change as needed. Wear deodorant or use other odor-reducing techniques if you can. Try not to wear anything with strong scents (e.g., excessive perfume or cologne) as some people are sensitive to those products. And don't forget fresh breath; we have mints at the front desk.
- *Be appropriate.* Dress appropriately, wearing comfortable shoes and respectful attire. Do not ask dance professionals for advice or instruction without offering to compensate them for their time and effort. Do not solicit others for any cause (no matter how worthy) or sell any goods or services if you have not received approval to do so from MCS staff.

### **Legal matters**

Per California state law, no smoking is allowed in indoor public areas, including e-cigarettes. If you wish to smoke or vape, step outside and away from the doorways. Do not attempt to sneak into the venue without paying, damage or steal other people's property, or give alcohol to anyone under 21

years old. We will ask anyone to leave who appears to be a danger to others or who engages in disorderly or destructive behavior. Those who cause property damage will be personally liable.

We want Mission City Swing to be a place where everyone and anyone can have a good time sharing in their passion for dancing. We are grateful for your help in fostering a safe, comfortable, and welcoming environment for all. If you have any questions or concerns, please contact Eric Jacobson at (510) 545-3173 or [eric@nakedbasics.com](mailto:eric@nakedbasics.com). You may also submit feedback through our website at [www.missioncityswing.com/contact](http://www.missioncityswing.com/contact) or through Facebook at [www.facebook.com/missioncityswing](http://www.facebook.com/missioncityswing).

This document was developed in October 2017 by Eric Jacobson for Mission City Swing, derived from the codes of conduct for [Boogie by the Bay](#), [Dance Jam Productions](#), [Sundown Blues](#), and [9:20 Special](#), with input from friends and allies.