

Alignment of the RSCDS Canberra and District Branch to the RSCDS Etiquette Guide

The RSCDS Canberra and District Branch etiquette guide is aligned with the etiquette guide issued by the RSCDS Society and follows its categories:

1. Being Inclusive
2. Being Respectful
3. Dancing Safe
4. Respecting Boundaries

There are a few expansions on the RSCDS Society Etiquette Guide specifically for the Branch, highlighted in the tables below. Additional information has been inserted in two of the RSCDS Guidelines – Being Respectful and Respecting Boundaries. The rest remains the same.

These additions also align with researched advice on how to respond positively when, as they say, ‘the set falls apart’.

RSCDS Canberra and District Branch Etiquette Guidance

2. Be Respectful	
Don't Give Feedback	Unless invited by a dancer, don't correct people's dancing on the social dance floor. Leave it to the teacher.
Mind your language	Don't be inappropriate – do not use sexist, homophobic, transphobic, ableist or racist language.
Respect the Teacher	Don't talk during walkthroughs and instructions. Listen to the instructions and focus on your part to play in the dance . Ask questions if there is a part that doesn't make sense.
Respect your fellow dancers	Don't engage other dancers in conversation while dance instructions are being given. Listen when a dance is being taught so others can hear without distraction. At times helpful clarifying statements can be given, however, assistance in instructions should be referred to the teacher. The same difficulty may be experienced by dancers in other sets. Don't assume if a dancer makes a mistake they need assistance throughout the dance.
	Do not lean into a dancer in a set and speak loudly / shout at the dancer when they are going wrong. You may be wrong yourself. This is intimidating behaviour and can lead to grievances being raised against you.

	<p>Do not 'manhandle' another dancer.</p> <p>If a dancer ends up facing the wrong way or in the wrong place, do not place your hands on them and move or turn them to the correct position.</p> <p>This is unnecessary maltreatment and can lead to grievances being raised against you.</p>
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4. Respect Boundaries	
Respect personal boundaries	They are different for everybody. If someone tells you that you are making them feel uncomfortable, listen to them and respect their need for personal space.
Look out for each other	If you feel harassed or are made to feel uncomfortable, contact the teacher / event organiser immediately.
	If you see someone who looks upset or uncomfortable, ask them if they are ok and see if they need your help.
It's ok to say no	If you don't want to dance with someone, you can say 'no thank you' and you don't need to explain.
	You may then ask or say 'yes' to someone else if you want to.
	You can stop dancing with anyone at any time.
When someone says no	If you ask someone to dance and they decline, respect their decision and ask someone else to dance. No one is obliged to dance with you.
Attitude	<p>Dancing is not about perfect execution of a dance.</p> <p>Particularly in a dance class teaching environment. This is about learning.</p> <p>Dancing is about enjoying the experience. It's not about 'the set was about to fall apart'.</p>
Inviting assistance	<p>Dancers can invite assistance from other dancers through cues. There are many obvious indications that a dancer is seeking assistance:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Verbal cues– saying 'help' or 'what comes next'? or I'm lost' ● Physical cues: shrugging shoulders, shaking head, facial expression of looking lost
	Dancers can also speak up before a dance starts, saying 'I don't know this dance. I'm happy for the set to help me'. They have invited assistance. Dancers in the set are free to give respectful assistance.
Knowing when to give assistance	At times the delivery of assistance, particularly uninvited assistance, can be seen as offensive and could lead to accusations of bullying.

	While these things have been accepted in the past, with the new direction from RSCDS HQ, uninvited assistance can lead to complaints.
Ensure an accepted cue has been given	First ensure a recognisable, accepted cue to invite assistance has been given. Only if there is a cue for assistance (as per above) can assistance be given.
	If there is no invitation to give assistance; do not give it. Even if you are an experienced dancer and/or know the dance, this does not give you the authority to give assistance. It must be requested first.
Declining assistance	Dancers have the right to decline uninvited assistance. Uninvited assistance can be perceived as offensive. When it is given without invitation, a dancer has the right to decline. This can be done by these cues: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Verbal cues – saying ‘I’m good thanks’. ‘No need’. • Physical cues – raising a hand in a stop signal (not high in the air - but at abdominal level) as an indication assistance is not needed. They may go on to make a mistake but a class is a teaching and learning environment. If a dancer is making a mistake, try to keep your place in the dance; dancers can do some amazing recoveries and end up in the right place!

1. Be Inclusive	
There’s room for everybody	Everybody is welcome at Scottish dancing, regardless of gender, gender identity, race, ethnicity, sexual orientation, disability, religion, physical appearance or employment status.
	There is room for dances of all levels of skill and experience.
Be ambidextrous	We encourage all dancers to explore dancing on both sides of the dance. While you may develop a preference for one side, being able to dance on either side is a useful skill.

Check which side of the dance	Don't assume. Be aware that you may want to clarify with someone which side they would prefer to dance on when you ask them to dance, just to avoid confusion.
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3. Dance Safe	
Keep Safe	Keep your eyes open on the dance floor and be aware of other dancers and other sets around you. If you accidentally bump into or hit someone, say sorry and make sure they are ok.
Add variations safely	Many people enjoy adding extra burls, twirls, spins etc. But no one likes being crashed into or lost in a dance they thought they knew.
	<p>Only add variations:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● you can dance safely ● that fit within the musical phrase ● when you are sure others in your set will not be confused by this embellishment. <p>If your variation requires other dancers to change how they dance, ensure you have their prior agreement.</p>