

MERI SQUARES SQUARE DANCE CLUB CODE OF CONDUCT

Approved: AGM - November 2020

Revisions: Executive – March 2025

The Meri Squares Square Dance Club promotes modern square dancing as a fun, social activity for persons of all ages. To that end, we teach proper dance technique and etiquette with the goal of creating a **fun, safe and respectful** dance environment for everyone. Dancers are expected to be sensitive to and respectful of other dancers and the caller.

All club members and callers should show empathy and kindness toward others, and should respect differing opinions and experiences. Inappropriate behaviour will not be accepted.

Some examples of unacceptable behaviour include:

- Rough dancing, such as swinging too fast, excessive twirling or grabbing a person's arm or hand with excessive force;
- Rudeness such as ordering people, or pushing them into place;
- Inappropriate touching or harassment of any sort (e.g. verbal, sexual);
- Physical contact with anyone in any inappropriate, angry or threatening way;
- Harassment or intimidation, including by electronic device and social media;
- Written and oral communications that are not respectful and polite, including personal conversations, telephone calls, emails and texts.

What is expected of all dancers:

- **Be welcoming.** Do your best to dance with, and be kind and welcoming, to everyone.
- **No scents please:** Dancers are asked to refrain from wearing any product with a scent as some people have acute allergies or find any scent unpleasant.
- **Be gentle:** Use the proper handhold without squeezing, pushing or pulling. A light touch is all that is needed to ensure an enjoyable dance experience. Don't engage in rough dancing, use too much strength, twirl without consent or too many times, or swing too fast or aggressively. Pushing someone into a position is never acceptable.
- **Mutual understanding.** Before swinging or twirling a new partner, make sure they are in agreement. Some dancers prefer not to swing or be twirled. Personal flourishes or styling can be awkward for others. It is always safe and acceptable to do the moves as they were originally taught.
- **Apologize for accidental touching.** Inappropriate touching of any sort is not tolerated. If accidental inappropriate touching does occur during the course of a dance, please apologize.

- **Respect everyone's physical boundaries.** Do not engage in inappropriate or unwanted physical contact. Be sensitive to other people's personal space, including physical proximity during calls on the dance floor or during breaks.
- **Graciously accept when someone says 'no' to a dance.** If you ask someone to dance and they say .no, graciously accept their decision and move on. You can say 'no' to a dance too.
- **Harassment of any sort (verbal or sexual) will not be tolerated.** This includes repeatedly asking an individual to dance who has declined or seeking to engage someone in unwanted conversation.
- **Respect human rights.** Anyone and everyone who would like to attend our dances is welcome. Be accepting of the diversity of people, ages, values and lifestyles that come with our modern square dance community. Respect dancer's wishes to dance with any gender they choose.
- **Be considerate and respectful to the club volunteers and callers.** The success of our weekly square dances and events organized by other clubs for the enjoyment of all square dancers is due to the efforts of many volunteers. Without their contribution, dancing would not be possible. Please respect, support and cooperate with those organizing and calling at dances.

If you have concerns

If you have any concerns that you are not comfortable addressing yourself, then please speak directly with any member of the Meri Squares executive. Your President and/or Vice-President are present on any dance night, as are several other Executive members. Do not hesitate to approach any of them with your concerns. This is YOUR club and enjoyment of our activities is our sole goal.

Members of the Executive can be viewed here: <https://merisquares.ca/wp/about-us/>

Right to act

The Meri Squares Executive reserves the right to refuse admission to, or ask an individual to leave, if we feel there is a need to do so based on inappropriate conduct.

Thank you for respecting this Code of Conduct and doing your part to maintain our fun, safe and respectful community.