

## CHICAGOLAND ENGLISH COUNTRY DANCERS

### DANCE CONDUCT AND ETIQUETTE POLICY

Chicagoland English Country Dance, in all its locations, strives to present a comfortable, family-friendly environment free from all forms of harassment, and based on mutual respect and inclusion. We want you to feel safe and welcome here and to look forward to dancing with us again.

The following are guidelines for our community's expectations concerning conduct and etiquette. Please take a moment to familiarize yourself with them.

#### PHYSICAL SAFETY AND COMFORT

Individual dancers vary in their ability to move on the dance floor. In many kinds of dancing, you are brought into close contact with other dancers, your partner or others, so it is important to be aware of the space around you.

Remember that your partner's comfort zone may be different from yours. Be sensitive to non-verbal cues and always err on the side of being considerate and respectful.

You are encouraged to communicate with your fellow dancers about your comfort and safety, particularly any discomfort you have, in a kind and respectful way.

Energetic dancing is fun, but be mindful of your own arms and legs and keep them out of your neighbors' dance space. If dancing with a partner, check with them to make sure you know their needs and preferences.

- Be aware of how tightly you are holding peoples' hands; a tight grip can be uncomfortable, especially if dancers are wearing rings or have arthritic hands. Hold with firm fingers, not with the thumb.
- Avoid jerking anyone's hand, arm or shoulder, such as at the end of turns or in a fast moving line.
- Before doing variations (e.g. extra twirls or swings) make sure your partner is willing, and the moves can be executed safely.

While eye contact is encouraged in most social dancing, and can help with dizziness when turning, if it makes you uncomfortable, don't feel forced. Always communicate with other dancers if you need to dance differently. If turning, or in closed couple position, you can look at your partner's ear or shoulder.

No alcoholic beverages are allowed during any of our dance events. Intoxication will not be tolerated on the dance floor.

#### CORRECTING OTHERS

Correcting others' dance errors by discreet non-verbal signals is preferred, acceptable, and often encountered. Verbal correction should normally be avoided unless agreed to in advance (e.g. between partners or in a set). Correction by touching is **not** acceptable unless permission is asked in advance. Even with permission, excessive verbal volume or excessive physical force must be avoided. If you make a mistake, or miss a figure, don't worry about it. Keep on dancing; don't leave the group in a set dance. Instead of rushing through a missed figure, it's best to skip it and go on to the next.

### **CLEANLINESS AND AVOIDING STRONG FRAGRANCE**

Personal hygiene is important during our activity. We expect a clean person and clean clothing of all dancers. As a courtesy, consider bringing a hand towel or fresh shirts in hot weather or if you sweat profusely. Many dancers in our community are hypersensitive or allergic to scented products such as perfume or aftershave. Please refrain from wearing any fragrances, and be sensitive to other odors that might cling to you.

### **RIGHT TO DECLINE WITHOUT EXPLANATION**

Anyone may ask anyone to dance, regardless of age or gender. Every dancer has the right to appropriately decline to interact with another dancer, on or off the dance floor, without explanation or repercussion. While we encourage you to dance with a variety of people, both new and familiar, your safety and comfort come first. If anyone persistently ignores or challenges another dancer's expressed wish not to interact, this is unacceptable harassment.

### **HARASSMENT**

Any form of verbal abuse, harassment (such as inappropriate comments, unwanted physical contact, etc.) or discriminatory behavior on and beyond the dance floor is not acceptable. Intimidating behavior and unwanted sexual attention are not allowed. If you feel you are experiencing this kind of attention please speak to the dance leader, caller or organizer, or someone in the group you feel you can trust to bring it up with the appropriate people. If you are concerned about privacy, anonymity, or confidentiality, please indicate that, including what specific information you consider confidential. We will do our best to respect your wishes.

### **IF YOU ENCOUNTER A PROBLEM**

If you encounter a problem at one of the dances that you would like help resolving, please speak to one of the organizers. Comments about the dance - positive or negative - can be communicated in person at an event, or via email to [chicagolandecd@gmail.com](mailto:chicagolandecd@gmail.com). The group organizers will address and take action as appropriate on comments and concerns that are received.

Any warning about unacceptable behavior needs to be taken seriously. The organizers reserve the right to expel from the dance anyone who does not choose to act within the limits of good behavior. The question of whether people expelled from the dance will be allowed to return will be decided case by case.

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