

SplashDance Complaint Policies

SplashDance (SD) is a non-profit Country Dance and Song Affiliate (CDSS) based in Asheville, North Carolina. We have Dance Behavior & Etiquette Guidelines, which are available separately from this document. Central to our values is respect for individuality, including gender expression, sexual identity, race and cultural heritage, religious affiliation, physical dis-/abilities, and more.

We aim to protect our community from future harm, and to help individuals recognize and improve their interactions. We aim to model best practices for resolving disputes in a positive and constructive manner. Transparency and accountability are prime among the values of the organization and are reflected in our policies and procedures. We aim to take appropriate action in a timely way.

Respect for the Complainant. We support victims. We encourage participants to report discomforting, offensive, or harmful behavior, and we take reports seriously. We aim to be sympathetic and sincere.

Inappropriate behavior is defined as behavior that injures, intimidates, harasses or otherwise harms people in our community:

Low-Level Complaints - (*Bad Dance Etiquette*) - generally can be corrected with education leading to increased awareness:

- Lifting and dipping without permission
- Dancing too closely/intimately without permission
- Hand grabbing/leading too forcefully/holding onto hands too long
 - This includes spinning too forcefully or forcing a spin
 - Continuing to lead moves that have been verbally or nonverbally declined
 - Dancers throwing themselves into moves that were not led
- Flourishes that are disruptive to others (using too much space, “selfish” dancing, etc.).
- Not taking “no” for an answer, pressuring/complaining about a response

Medium Level Complaints - (*to be treated as Low or High Level on a case-by-case basis*):

- Unwanted flirting or attention
- Pursuing romantic relations between a minor and someone over the age of 18
- Interfering with dance hosts, musicians, staff, or volunteers.
- Dancing While Impaired
- Disrespecting someone’s individuality
- Harassment on social media platforms, text spamming, or other forms of harassment
- Patterns of repeated lower-level offense, with little indication of understanding or intent to improve

High-Level Complaints - (*Personal Harm, Destruction of Property*) - may warrant an immediate suspension, and possibly a permanent ban:

- Stalking at or outside of the event location
- Sexual harassment
- Threats of violence or other harm
- Physical/sexual assault
- Criminal activity, theft, vandalism

Respect for someone named in a complaint: We also recognize that many situations have conflicting perspectives of what happened. We recognize the possibility of false accusation, or an accusation based on mis-perception, and that being falsely accused is another form of victimization.

- Complaints must be specific enough to identify an offending behavior.
 - Complaints about general demeanor may be documented but are not actionable.
- Individuals named in a complaint shall be informed of the specifics of the complaint lodged against them, and they shall have the opportunity to respond in full.
 - If a complainant wishes to remain anonymous, and if discussing the details of the behavior will reveal the complainant's identity, then anonymity may make the complaint unactionable.
- As much as possible, we aim to give warnings and opportunities to improve before being suspended or permanently banned.
 - Low level offenses should result in multiple warnings before any penalties are applied. However, a pattern of offenses, whether high or low level, with little or no improvement, may be cause for suspension or ban.
 - If multiple low-level complaints are lodged after-the-fact (as a "me-too" result of an initial complaint), the collected accusations constitute a first warning, unless there is evidence that previous warnings and improvement efforts have been made by other Leaders.
 - For high-level complaints, the merit of after-the-fact accusations is determined by the Board, and may warrant immediate suspension.

Additional Policies:

- Becoming volatile during discussion of a Low-level incident may immediately escalate the complaint to a High-level, with immediate consequences, including a temporary suspension and follow-up by the Board.
- The SD Board is not a forum to resolve personal disputes that occur outside of dance events except in situations where the dispute directly impacts SD. If deemed appropriate for involvement, Board response is for the purpose of protecting participants at future SD events from potential harm. SD does not impose consequences for the purpose of personal redress.
- The Board or designated committee should make every effort to resolve a referred complaint within 30 days.
- Final resolution will take the result of legal action into consideration.
- Scope of SD Review - SD is not an investigative body and does not have the staff or other resources to conduct an investigation. It is the responsibility of the parties involved to submit information to the Board if they wish it to be considered (generally, within 10 days, so the Board has time to review the complaint within the 30 day goal).
- While the above policies guide decision-making, the SD Board has the right to immediately suspend or permanently ban someone from SD events if the Board believes they pose a harm to the community.
- Appeal Procedure:
 - May be requested in writing by the primary parties.
 - Should include new information that was not previously considered.
 - Should document fulfillment of any agreements that were made to resolve a complaint (action by one of the parties that would enable a change of status).
 - If the complaint is withdrawn, the Board may reconsider previous decisions.
- All complaints, responses, and relevant information should be documented and saved for organizational memory.
- Non-Admit List for Events - A list of all individuals who are banned or currently suspended will be provided to the Board and organizing committee.
- Public Disclosure - Upon inquiry, the non-admit list may be made available to **Leaders** of other traditional dance and music communities.

Implementation: Managing Complaints:

The person reporting the complaint will be asked to describe the nature of the complaint, if anyone witnessed the behavior, and action they can suggest to resolve the complaint.

The SD representative receiving the complaint will determine its severity and should respond as follows:

Low Level Complaint:

- a. Document the complaint using the Complaint Form. The form guides the Host through all the information that is to be collected.
- b. If the complaint can not be immediately addressed, it should be forwarded to the SD Board for follow-up.
- c. The SD rep may discuss the complaint with the person-named at the time the complaint is received, referring to our Organizational Values and Behavior & Etiquette Guidelines. Confirm that the person understands the complaint and will take steps to correct their behavior. OR, if they dispute the complaint, the parties may agree to disagree. The person-named should be informed that the incident is being documented. While they do not have to agree with the complainant, a pattern of repeated complaints may be cause for further action.
- d. The response should be documented on the Complaint Form and forwarded to the appropriate person for retention. A copy should be offered to both parties.

Mid-Level Complaint: Choose high or low level response, at the SD representative's discretion.

High Level Complaint:

High level complaints should be handled by the Event Leaders or the SD Board. The person-named should be contacted to set up a time to meet to discuss the complaint and work through a constructive problem-solving process to reach a resolution. (See full handbook and training materials for details regarding that process). The policies listed above should guide decisions regarding warnings, suspension, and banning.

At an event in progress:

- A rep receiving a high-level complaint should document it using the Complaint Form, then forward it to the appropriate person to be addressed outside the event.
- **If the person-named is volatile, impaired, or represents any potential immediate harm, they should be removed immediately.**
 - The rep should involve additional SD Leaders immediately for witnesses and support.
 - The individual should be informed that they are suspended until further notice.
 - A copy of this Policy Summary should be offered, and they should be informed that the SD Complaint Policy Handbook will guide the Board's further response.
 - Contact information should be documented, if possible, in order to follow up with a constructive problem-solving process. If we are unable to contact the individual, the suspension will not be able to be addressed and will remain in effect. According to policies, suspension pending final resolution should not exceed 30 days, except in extraordinary circumstances.

These policies and procedures are continually fine-tuned as we gain experience resolving complaints.

If anyone has concerns or wishes to make comments, or has additional information to provide, you may contact us at safety@splashdance.org