

Advice for Teachers, Musicians, Committees and Volunteers

There are so many different scenarios and we've had a lot of "interesting" incidences at our events and classes. Some are amusing (random drunks wandering into an event) and some are very serious. This is an outline of some possible scenarios that you may have to deal with. Remember that Katie Haigh (RSCDS CWPO) is also generally available to assist if you would like extra support at cwpo@rscds.org.

Volunteers, Teachers and Musicians – please alert your event committee or Safer Spaces Volunteer of any incident.

Employees/Committee/Staff/Safer Spaces Volunteers – A brief list of possible scenarios (by no means comprehensive)

Ask for Angela

In line with the national initiative, Ask for Angela is a code for people who would like assistance in exiting the venue if they find themselves in a situation where they feel unsafe. You can read more about the initiative [here](#). Follow the steps below for dealing with a sexual assault.

Drunks on the dance floor

If there is a venue manager report to them, if not, ask the drunk to leave and walk towards the door. Don't physically engage with them and be polite and friendly but firm. Most will leave but do call the police if they aren't moving.

Verbal arguments between class members/social dancers

Point out to the people arguing that they are disturbing other dancers and to take it outside. Don't try to resolve any arguments that aren't related to us!

Physical Fights

Inform the people fighting that you will call the police. Then call the police. Even if they stop fighting shortly afterwards, we need to protect our dancers from physical violence and it must be reported to the police.

Theft – catching someone in the act

Don't try to physically tackle someone accused of theft. Do enlist others to accompany you when you challenge them including the owner of the property so they can confirm that the item belongs to them. Call the police.

Accidents

If you have been trained in first aid, then do administer relief where you can. If not, call an ambulance and follow the advice given by the ambulance service. Stay with the person who has had an accident and clear a safe space around them. If a serious dancing etiquette

incident occurs on the dance floor, please take the names of all of the people involved and send a full report to Jon Berridge (COO) at Jon.Berridge@rscds.org. If someone sustains a soft tissue injury during a class, such as a twisted ankle or a kick to a shin, elevate it in the first instance, and if they are able to walk on it and make their way home, they should be advised to use an ice pack within the first 24 hours if the injury begins to swell. If they have any further concerns then they should be advised to call 111, or go to a minor injuries unit that has X-ray facilities.

If someone reports a sexual assault to you:

- 1.** Find a quiet place for the complainant to talk to you in confidence. If they wish to bring a friend with them, please let them do so. The important thing is that they feel comfortable.
 - 2.** Listen. Give the complainant your full attention. Don't interrupt and wait until they have finished speaking. Focus on what they are saying and be patient if they are having difficulty in describing the incident. They may not wish to fully describe what happened and this is fine, they are not obliged to. They may also wish to have a moment before explaining. Give them time to gather their thoughts and leave or stay with them as they prefer. If they are on their own, offer to find a friend to sit with them or find someone you trust to sit by them.
 - 3.** Ask them what they would prefer to happen. They may want to leave but feel anxious about getting home/back to the accommodation – please arrange for a cab for them and use RSCDS money to pay for it. If you use your own money, the RSCDS will reimburse you. At a residential event, offer to have someone accompany them to their room and remain with them/check in on them as they prefer. If they decide to stay but want the accused to leave, then find the accused and ask if you can have a quiet word. Bring them to a quiet area but, if you feel uncomfortable being alone with them, please stay where others can still see you. Explain to them that there's been a complaint of a serious nature made against them and that you have to ask them to leave. You can stress that at this time we are not making a judgement but that they have made another dancer feel uncomfortable and they have requested that the accused be asked to leave. Tell them we are happy to refund their money either now or at a later date, but they are not able to stay until this issue has been resolved. Give them Jon Berridge's (COO) email so that they contact Jon.Berridge@rscds.org directly about the issue.
 - 4.** If the accused has been asked to leave, then do allow them time to gather their belongings. Do make sure that they don't try to find the person who has accused them by keeping a gentle eye on them as they pack up to leave.
 - 5.** Once the accused has left, let the complainant know. Allow them to stay sitting in the quiet space for as long as they wish.
 - 6.** We will always take any complaint seriously and ask the accused to leave if the complainant so wishes. We feel that our members understand the importance of ensuring that everyone feels respected and comfortable while at our classes or events and will also understand why we will occasionally ask someone to leave.
- At residential events, ask the accused to leave the event/class/venue. If single rooms are available they can keep use of that space, if not they will need to find alternative accommodation. They should not attend other events/classes/social spaces until the complaint is verified. This should be established as soon as possible. If it is upheld follow the procedures above. If it is not fully upheld, a reminder of the expectations of the code of conduct and final warning should be given along with a suggestion to remain away from the

complainant. If the complaint is found to be unsubstantiated, an apology and brief reminder of the code of conduct should be given. If the complaint is one that requires Police involvement, the accused should be asked to leave residential accommodation immediately.

For all incidents, please do report the incident to [Event Director/Safer Spaces Lead] immediately and, if you feel it appropriate, copy in EMAIL RSCDS HQ Safeguarding?

Send a short email outlining the following:

Who was involved

Where it happened

What happened

Contact details of person who complained and person accused (if possible).

The organisation, [Good Night Out](#), have recommended that you to stick to facts when reporting incidents as there might be an unconscious bias in any opinions added to any report.

To learn more, check out our [Safer Spaces | Royal Scottish Country Dance Society \(rscds.org\)](#)

Adapted with permission from and thanks to Swing Patrol London.