



South West Swing

Safe Spaces Policy & Procedure

This Safe Spaces Procedure explains how South West Swing receives and responds to reports of misconduct or possible breaches of our Code of Conduct at SWS-associated activities. It outlines the steps we take to protect safety, handle reports confidentially, and make fair, proportionate decisions.

All attendees at South West Swing events — including Boogie Down South — are required to follow our Code of Conduct. Anyone may report misconduct, a suspected breach of the Code of Conduct, or a Safe Spaces concern. Reports will be handled confidentially on a need-to-know basis, respecting the privacy of both the person impacted and the person reported.

Every situation is assessed individually, taking into account relevant context such as any prior reports, how long ago past incidents occurred, where the incident took place, and other available information.

1. Relationship to the Code of Conduct

This document explains how South West Swing (SWS) receives, responds to, and manages reports about possible breaches of the SWS Code of Conduct and other safety concerns connected to SWS activities.

- What behaviour is expected / what is not okay is set out in the SWS Code of Conduct.
- This Policy covers actions, roles, timeframes, investigation, decision-making, and outcomes.
- SWS may take safety action under this procedure even when a matter may also be handled by a venue, employer, or police. SWS is a community organisation and does not operate as a court.

2. Scope

This procedure applies to all SWS-organised or SWS-associated activities, including classes, socials, workshops, festivals, after-parties, transport/carpooling arranged through SWS channels, and SWS-related online spaces/communications. It applies to all participants at SWS-associated activities (attendees, students, teachers, volunteers, organisers/committee, contractors, DJs/bands, photographers, vendors, and venue/security staff where relevant).

SWS may also respond to offsite conduct when it reasonably impacts safety or participation in the SWS community.

3. Safe Spaces roles and responsibilities

3.1 Safe Spaces nominees (primary contacts)

Reports are coordinated by SWS Safe Spaces nominees:

- Jethro Hardinge (Treasurer)
- Linda Hosking (Secretary)

Responsibilities:

- receive and document reports
- ensure timely acknowledgements
- lead triage and safety planning
- coordinate investigation (where required)
- convene decision-makers
- communicate outcomes (within privacy limits)
- manage secure records

3.2 Event duty leads and organisers (on-the-night response)

At events, any organiser/committee member (and where applicable venue management/security) may take immediate steps to protect safety (see Section 7).

3.3 Conflict of interest rule

Any person involved in receiving, investigating, deciding, or enforcing an outcome must step aside if they have a conflict of interest (e.g., close friendship, partnership, family relationship, financial dependency, direct involvement in the incident).

If both Safe Spaces nominees have a conflict, SWS will appoint an alternate decision-maker (e.g., another committee member and/or an external adviser).

4. How to report

4.1 Reporting options

Reports can be made:

- **in person** to an organiser/committee member at an event, or
- **by email** to boogiedownsafely@gmail.com

If a report is received by someone else (e.g., teacher/DJ/volunteer), they must:

- ensure immediate safety needs are addressed, and
- offer to connect the reporter with a Safe Spaces nominee as soon as possible.

4.2 Anonymous reports

SWS accepts anonymous reports. Anonymous reports may:

- inform monitoring and risk management, and
- contribute to identifying patterns, but may limit SWS's ability to investigate or apply stronger outcomes.

4.3 What information helps

Reporters may share as much or as little as they want. Helpful details can include:

- what happened (in their words)
- date/time/location
- names/identifiers of involved people (if known)
- witnesses (if any)
- any supporting material (messages, screenshots, photos)
- what the reporter needs right now (support, no-contact, etc.)

5. Timeframes

SWS will aim to:

- acknowledge receipt of a report within 24 hours
- move to a triage/safety plan promptly (same day for urgent concerns; otherwise as soon as practicable)

Further timelines depend on severity, complexity, and availability of parties/witnesses.

6. Triage and severity assessment

On receiving a report, Safe Spaces nominees will assess the below and assign a Severity Level:

- the nature of the alleged conduct (as it relates to the Code of Conduct)
- immediate and ongoing safety risk
- vulnerability and power dynamics (e.g., teacher/student, organiser/attendee)
- whether this is a one-off concern or part of a pattern (including prior reports)
- what the reporter wants and needs (where possible)

We will use the below internal Safe Spaces Incident Severity Guide to assign a Level and support consistent decision-making, while recognising every situation is unique.

6.1 Safe Spaces Incident Severity Guide

Level	Definition	Example behaviours	Impact indicators	Typical immediate controls	Typical outcomes
1 – Low	Minor, one-off, accidental or inconsiderate; usually stops with feedback.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Off-hand/poorly worded comment • Minor inappropriate joke • Accidental non-sexual touch • Uncomfortable dance connection (too close hold, spine-leading, awkward positioning) without clear sexual intent • Brief unwanted questioning after declining a dance • Unsolicited advice/teaching • Minor accidental injury • Non-targeted “ugly” online opinions/disagreement 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Brief discomfort or annoyance • no ongoing fear • no injury beyond minor treatment. 	Check-in with the impacted person; remind Code of Conduct; make immediate correction; separate dance partners if needed; monitor.	Informal conversation; education/consent reminder; documented note if relevant; monitor for repetition.
2 – Moderate	Repeated Level 1, boundary-testing, sexualised contact, degrading speech, or harmful online conduct; more intrusive or deliberate.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Unwanted flirting • Repeated unwanted attention/advances • Persistent asking after “no” • Deliberate groping (breasts/bottom/crotch) • Sexual comments/jokes supporting rape or violence • Inappropriate social media upload (up-skirt, down-top, sexualised angle) • Repeated inconsiderate, unsafe behaviour after correction 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ongoing discomfort • Humiliation • Avoidance • Ceased attendance • Moderate distress 	Separate parties; clear direction to stop; no-contact direction (where requested/needed); remove from floor; consider event ejection if behaviour continues/serious.	Written warning; conditions (e.g., no close hold; attendance with buddy); required consent refresher; monitoring plan; role restrictions (no teaching/hosting/volunteering); possible short suspension depending on risk.
3 – Significant	Patterned harm or escalation: intimidation, bullying, stalking, repeated Level 2, or moderate injury. Often persists despite requests to stop.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Bullying/intimidation (online or face-to-face) • Stalking-like behaviour (repeated following or contact after being told not interested) • Spreading harmful rumours as truth • Repeated Level 2 incidents • intentional repeated harm; moderate physical injury. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Fear/anxiety • Reputational harm • Social isolation • Injury needing treatment (e.g. stitches) • Moderate joint injury • Moderate psychological impacts • Counselling support needed 	Interim measures likely: temporary suspension pending assessment; no-contact direction; attendance conditions; increased monitoring; involve venue/security.	Formal investigation recommended; temporary ban or long ban common; strict conditions; removal from roles; written behavioural agreement; escalation if breached.

4 – Severe	Serious misconduct, often illegal; significant sexual/physical boundary violation; serious injury/high risk; urgent protective action.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Hands under clothing • Pressure or coercion for a sexual act • Indecent exposure • Deliberate physical harm (e.g., broken bone) • Theft • Actions creating high risk of harm. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Serious distress • Regular counselling • Severe anxiety or depression • Hospital treatment: broken bones, serious joint damage, etc. • Financial loss • Loss of support networks. 	Immediate suspension from event/activity; remove from venue; no-contact; notify venue/security; consider emergency services; support impacted person to access specialist services.	Formal investigation (and/or external adviser); long ban or permanent ban likely if credible; conditions if ever returning; consider notifying other organisers or venues on need-to-know basis; encourage police report (impacted person's choice unless legally required).
5 – Critical	Extreme violence or severe criminal conduct; life-threatening or life-altering harm.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Forced sexual acts or sexual assault • Serious physical assault • Rape • Severe violence causing permanent injury • Murder. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Permanent trauma or injury (psychological or physical) • Life-changing harm • Death • Suicide risk. 	Immediate removal + indefinite suspension from all SWS activities; urgent safeguarding; call emergency services where appropriate; preserve safety info/evidence as provided.	Permanent ban expected; notify venue/security and (where legally required) authorities; external supports prioritised; SWS safety prioritised over participation.

6.2 Cross-cutting escalation rules

A higher level will be escalated to if any of the following apply:

- retaliation for reporting
- credible threats of further harm
- repeated pattern, multiple reports, or multiple impacted people
- abuse of power (teacher/student, organiser/attendee)
- intoxication used to excuse or enable harm
- respondent refuses to follow a clear no-contact or event restriction
- conduct appears criminal or creates immediate safety risk

7. Immediate safety response

SWS may take immediate action to protect safety **before** any investigation is complete. Actions may include:

- checking in with the reporter and offering a support person/advocate

- separating parties (including asking someone to leave the dance floor)
- giving a clear direction to stop a behaviour
- relocating someone to a safer space
- contacting venue management/security
- arranging an escort to car/transport or contacting a friend/support person
- calling emergency services where needed
- **removing a person from the venue/event** when required for safety

Immediate actions are based on **risk and wellbeing**, not on proof beyond doubt.

8. Incident Report Pathway

8.1 Informal Response (generally Level 1 and 2)

May include:

- a conversation referencing the Code of Conduct
- a clear boundary-setting conversation facilitated by Safe Spaces
- a written reminder or warning
- Education or coaching on matters relevant to the report or incident (e.g. consent, floorcraft, safe dance practices)
- Monitoring and check-ins

Informal responses will only be used where it is **safe and appropriate**, and where the reporter is not pressured into direct engagement.

8.2 Formal Investigation (generally Levels 3+)

A formal Investigation process may be used when:

- the alleged behaviour is serious
- there is a pattern of reports
- the reporter requests formal handling
- there is a significant power imbalance
- interim restrictions are required
- facts are contested and a structured assessment is needed

8.3 External escalation

SWS may encourage or support external reporting where relevant (e.g., police, medical services, specialist support services). SWS will respect the reporter's choices except where required by law or immediate safety needs.

9. Interim protective measures

SWS may put interim measures in place while assessing/investigating, including:

- no-contact directions
- attendance conditions (e.g., must attend with a buddy, cannot attend after-parties)
- role restrictions (e.g., cannot teach/volunteer/host)
- dance restrictions (e.g., no close hold)
- temporary suspension from events

Interim measures are precautionary and may be applied even before a final decision, where safety requires.

10. Investigation process (when used)

SWS will gather information in a way that is respectful, trauma-informed, and proportionate.

Investigation steps may include:

1. recording the report (and any supporting material)
2. inviting the reporter to share further details (optional)
3. informing the respondent of the nature of the concern (with privacy safeguards)
4. giving the respondent an opportunity to respond
5. speaking with relevant witnesses (if available)
6. reviewing any prior relevant reports
7. assessing credibility, consistency, and risk

Participation is voluntary. A matter may still proceed based on available information if someone declines to participate.

11. Decision-making

11.1 Decision makers

To reduce bias and strengthen fairness in a small community, SWS will use a Safety Panel for Formal Investigations:

- Minimum one Safe Spaces nominee, plus
- One additional committee member with no conflict, plus
- One additional person (committee member, senior volunteer, or external adviser) for Level 3+ matters where possible.

For very serious matters, SWS may seek an external adviser/investigator.

11.2 Decision standard

SWS will make decisions using:

- balance of probabilities (more likely than not), and
- a safety risk assessment (protective conditions may be applied where credible risk exists, even if some facts are disputed).

11.3 Outcomes decision

Outcomes are chosen based on:

- severity and impact
- repetition/patterns
- willingness to change behaviour
- power dynamics
- safety needs of the community
- practical enforceability

12. Outcomes and enforcement

Possible outcomes include (one or more):

- documented conversation referencing the Code of Conduct
- verbal or written warning
- required consent/safety education
- monitoring or check-ins at events
- conditions of attendance (including no-contact directions)
- restrictions on roles (teaching/hosting/volunteering)
- communication with venue or security where needed to enforce safety
- temporary ban (one event or a fixed period)
- long-term ban
- permanent ban

SWS will enforce outcomes at SWS events. Breaching conditions (including retaliation) may result in escalation.

13. Communication of decisions

SWS will communicate:

- to the reporter: what action SWS is taking, as far as privacy permits
- to the respondent: the decision, expectations/conditions, duration, and consequences for breach

SWS will keep communications clear and factual. SWS will not publish identifying details about reports or outcomes.

14. Confidentiality and privacy

SWS will handle reports on a **need-to-know** basis. Information is shared only as required to:

- respond to immediate safety needs
- investigate and decide outcomes
- enforce conditions
- meet legal obligations

Confidentiality limits: SWS may disclose information if there is an immediate safety risk, legal requirement, or to obtain emergency/professional support.

15. Records management

- All reports, notes, and decisions are stored in a secure drive (Boogie Down Safely) accessible only to Safe Spaces nominees.
- SWS retains records **permanently**, to help identify patterns and support consistent safety decisions over time.

16. Notifying other organisers/venues

SWS may notify other organisers or venues depending on severity and credible risk, sharing only what is necessary for safety and enforceability. Decisions to notify will consider privacy, fairness, and community protection.

17. Appeal or Review

SWS decisions under this procedure are final. SWS may correct administrative errors such as mistaken identity.

18. Support and welfare

Safe Spaces nominees may:

- offer a support person/advocate during reporting
- encourage connection to appropriate external support services where needed

South West Swing is committed to acting promptly and respectfully when concerns are raised, with safety and dignity at the centre of our response. Thank you for helping us look after our community by speaking up and supporting each other.