

San Antonio Swing Dance Society's Sexual Harassment Policy

Our goal at SASDS is to create a fun and welcoming environment for our entire community, and we want to make certain that all members feel comfortable at all times. We have a zero tolerance policy towards sexual harassment. If it is happening to you or you see it happening, report it as soon as possible to one of the instructors or Board members. We will take immediate action. We want all our members to feel safe. All members are expected to treat each other with respect.

What is sexual harassment?

Sexual harassment refers to unwelcome sexual advances, requests for sexual favors, and any other verbal or physical conduct of a sexual nature that make the recipient feel as if they are in an intimidating and hostile environment. Actions such as the following are highly inappropriate and can spiral quickly into bullying and abuse:

- Sexual pranks, or repeated sexual teasing, jokes, and innuendos, either in person or via social media
- Verbal abuse of a sexual nature
- Touching or grabbing of a sexual nature
- Repeatedly standing too close to or brushing up against someone
- Repeatedly asking a person to socialize when the person has said no or has indicated they are not interested
- Repeatedly making sexually suggestive gestures
- Making or posting sexually demeaning or offending pictures, or demanding someone look at photos or videos of a sexual nature
- Retaliation against someone who has ignored or rejected an advance
- Talking about anyone's appearance, body, or dancing in a sexual way
- Behaving in a way that demonstrates you feel entitled to either dance with or have the attention of someone who has demonstrated their lack of interest
- Following someone into the parking lot or away from a dance without their express permission
- Using your position or status as a member of our community in order to behave in an unsavory manner

If you are in any way unsure about how you are coming across, ask! Asking people how they feel and if they're comfortable and enjoying themselves is imperative for a community based around partner dancing.

If someone tells you that they are not comfortable, the only valid response is to listen, apologize, stop the behavior, and don't do it again. Everyone's boundaries are slightly different, and we all have the right to be heard and respected. One dance partner might not be comfortable with some moves, but another might be fine with them. It doesn't make either one wrong. The important thing is to hear and respect the boundary and not to ignore it just because it's not what you want.

What to listen for:

Often people feel that a straight "no" or "I feel uncomfortable" might come across as rude or jarring. This is especially true when people are entering a new community and want to make friends. Most of us would rather avoid awkwardness or tension. "No" and "I feel uncomfortable" might look and sound like any of the following:

- "I'm busy"
- "I have a boyfriend/girlfriend"
- "I'm not sure"
- No response, shutting down
- Taking a step back, moving or walking away
- Turning away or avoiding eye contact
- Ignoring a phone call, text, or social media post
- Anything less than an enthusiastic "YES!"

Most people have been socialized to not be rude and not to hurt others' feelings. If you're receiving mixed signals or you're getting anything less than an enthusiastic "yes," back off. Immediately.

Sometimes someone might give an enthusiastic "YES!" one night and change their mind the next. Or even during the same night, or within the same dance. Or they might give the enthusiastic "YES!" to other people and not you. You know what? That's the way it should be. All of us have the right to decide who we dance and socialize with.

Listen and be aware of the signals someone is giving you. Ignoring someone else's boundaries is never okay. Listen when someone tells you how they feel. If you're not sure, ask them if they're okay. Respect your fellow dancers.

What do I do if I'm being harassed? Or if someone is making me feel uncomfortable?

Don't ignore it. If you feel safe doing so, share how you feel as soon as possible. You can also tell an instructor or Board member. Some of the following steps will be taken, depending on the situation:

- At least two Board members will meet with the person in question as soon as possible to review the incident and attempt resolution.
- If the two Board members identify that further action is warranted, the President will call for a meeting to review the incident. The individual in question will be asked to attend to review the incident with the Board.
- If warranted, the Board will meet in a private session to consider sanctions which may include termination of membership and/or restriction from all SASDS sponsored events. Sanctions must be approved by two-thirds of the Board.
- If we are notified of a sexual assault, we reserve the right to contact police.

We believe you. Let us help. We are a community that protects each other. The nature of sexual harassment is that it can cause the recipient embarrassment, shame, humiliation, and/or severe discomfort. You are not to blame if someone else is disrespecting you.

Here at SASDS we don't want anyone to do *anything* they don't want to do. This applies both on and off the dance floor. Let's all help everyone feel safe and enjoy their experience to the fullest!