

# A guide to class etiquette and general sociability for dancers at Scottish Country Dancing classes in Canberra

*May I have the pleasure of this dance?*

This etiquette guide for Scottish Country Dancing in Canberra is based on the principles of Teamwork and Respect. These principles should be upheld during all interactions at classes, social dances, meetings and events.

Scottish Country Dancing is not solo dancing. Each person in the set contributes to the enjoyment, social spirit and flow of the dance.

Consideration towards a partner throughout the dance enhances the enjoyment and elevates the beauty of a dance.

Partnering is a privilege in which all possible opportunities to acknowledge and support each other are taken throughout the whole dance. Examples of helpful awareness and consideration, such as dancing shoulder to shoulder in mirror reels, giving hands in turns, and being aware of each other's position, even if far apart in the set, contribute the element of symmetry.

All couples in the set have equal importance during the dance. The supporting couples can show sociability by stepping up and down to leave space for the first couple, 'covering' with other dancers, anticipating the next formation and being ready to subtly indicate a direction if help is needed by another dancer. Considerations such as these contribute to maximum enjoyment and maintain the spirit and sociability of the dance.

Helpfulness, awareness and consideration of others form the essence of good Teamwork and Respect.

## **Dance class etiquette**

- Physical contact is limited to that needed in formations during the dance. Hands are given primarily as a help to other dancers and the teacher will advise the correct method. There is no place for shoving, pushing, pulling or dragging in SCD.
- Friendly eye contact should be maintained both to maintain sociability and assist other dancers during the walkthrough and in the dance. When eye contact is used effectively, there is rarely a need for verbal reminders.
- The class teacher holds responsibility for leadership and decision-making during the class.
  - Give the teacher your full attention and allow others to listen.
  - Do not pre-empt or guess what the teacher may say next.
  - If your set needs clarification and the teacher is helping another set, wait until the teacher is available and then ask for assistance.
- The teacher will provide feedback on areas of improvement in a positive and encouraging manner. This is not the role of anyone else in the class.
- It is acceptable to ask anyone of any gender to dance.

## **Etiquette at balls and socials**

- Pay attention to the MC, recappers and musicians and do not distract others who are trying to listen.
- It is acceptable to ask anyone of any gender to dance.
- Wait until the next dance is announced before forming sets.
- Join the set at the foot without pushing in on sets already formed.
- The first couple of each line counts the number of couples required for the dance. They advise the MC if the final set is incomplete by holding up their fingers to indicate the number of couples that are required. If sets are complete, they cross their arms above their heads to signal that no additional couples are required.
- Be aware of the boundaries of the sets and be considerate of other dancers at all times, especially in crowded halls.
- Helpful use of hands, friendly eye contact with other dancers, thoughtful stepping up or down, anticipation, awareness of other dancers, covering and phrasing will contribute to everyone's enjoyment and will maintain the social spirit of the dance.
- Teamwork in the set is important. Recognise the need to accommodate a range of abilities while dancing.
- After the dance has finished, thank the other dancers in the set and then leave the dance floor.