

Guidelines for Children Dancing with the Royal Scottish Country Dance Society San Francisco Branch

RSCDS Headquarters has produced a policy regarding children in Scottish Country Dance classes. The San Francisco Branch needs the following guidelines because the points raised in the Code of Practice from Headquarters are broad in scope. Guidelines are defined as any guide or indication of future course of action. The following document covers points that are specific to the San Francisco Branch. The following guidelines for children dancing in Branch Classes of the RSCDS San Francisco Branch are meant to work in conjunction with the Children's Activities Policy and Code of Practice 2001-2 from Headquarters. These guidelines are for the protection of three groups:

- I** Children dancing in children's classes and children dancing in adult classes.*
- II** Adults attending Branch functions where children are present.*
- III** The San Francisco Branch of the RSCDS.*

Children are considered to be those people under the age of 16. Anyone 16 and older has all the rights and privileges that full membership in the RSCDS allows in accordance with the RSCDS Constitution, III Memberships, #1.

I. Children dancing in children's classes and children dancing in adult classes.

Children's skills develop at a different rate than an adult's skills. Children need to learn at a rate and progression that ensures they develop into the best dancers they can. So, to that end:

- a) Children should be attending an age appropriate class if there is one available in their area.
- b) A parent or designated adult should accompany children dancing in adult classes. The parent or designated adult should stay through the entire class.
- c) If children under the age of 16 attend a monthly dance party, they should be accompanied by a parent or designated adult and should have current Scottish Country dance experience.
- d) Inappropriate language or behavior between children (e.g. teasing, bullying, vulgarity, etc.) will not be tolerated. The child (children) will be asked to leave the class. A meeting between the parent(s), child (children) and teacher, outside of regular class time, will take place before the child (children) rejoins the class as per Item #4 in the Code of Practice regarding Children's Activities from Headquarters.
- e) All children enrolled in Scottish Country Dance classes are invited to dance at any Branch function specifically for children (e.g. the annual Children's Spring Ball). Substantial participation of children in activities that are primarily of an adult nature is not recommended.
- f) When children under the age of 16 participate in adult demonstration classes or teams at any time, it is of the greatest importance that provision be made to respect their physical, emotional and developmental well-being, as well as their safety and privacy, including appropriate changing areas for men and boys and for women and girls.

Adopted March 2003

II. Adults attending Branch functions where children are present.

Evening classes, monthly parties, class parties, etc. are primarily for the enjoyment of adult dancers. Not all adults enjoy or appreciate children. By the same token, children attending primarily adult functions need to be safe and have their right for privacy recognized. With that in mind:

- a) Children may be allowed to attend an adult class only if the majority of adults give their consent to have children in their class and understand the next item (II.b).
- b) Adults must be aware of children's rights to personal privacy and guard against actions or words that could be misunderstood or cause offense (e.g. flirting, touching, inappropriate language, etc.) as per Item #4 in the Code of Practice regarding Children's Activities from Headquarters.
- c) Any child attending an adult class, monthly party or other Branch event and causing a disturbance or distraction for the other members of the class may be asked to leave the class by the teacher and/or class manager. The child may return to class only after a meeting with the child, the parent, and the teacher.
- d) Any adult in a class or Branch monthly party who is concerned about a child's behavior or another adult's behavior or language toward a child should speak to the teacher in charge or the Branch's Youth Coordinator.

III. The San Francisco Branch of the RSCDS.

In order to promote a safe dance environment:

- a) Teachers accepting children into adult classes sponsored by the RSCDS San Francisco Branch must familiarize themselves with the Policy and the Code of Practice for Children's Activities from Headquarters and the Guidelines for Children Dancing with the Royal Scottish Country Dance Society San Francisco Branch. Teachers who teach a Children's Class or who have children attending their adult class must sign the declaration of responsibility form and have it on file with the Youth Coordinator as per Item #3 in the Code of Practice regarding Children's Activities from Headquarters.
- b) An incident involving a child and an adult that raises the concern of a teacher or another individual should be reported in strict confidentiality to the Branch's Youth Coordinator in writing within two weeks of the incident as per Item #9 in the Code of Practice regarding Children's Activities from Headquarters.
- c) All children attending a class of the RSCDS San Francisco Branch must have their parent sign the Branch youth enrollment form before the child begins attending classes.
- d) The Branch Committee of the San Francisco Branch of the RSCDS should take action when Branch classes/teachers abuse or disregard these guidelines.
- e) A copy of the Code of Practice regarding Children's Activities from Headquarters and the Guidelines for Children Dancing with the RSCDS San Francisco Branch must be given to all teachers and class managers in the San Francisco Branch. The teacher/class manager must make this information known to all dancers in classes which children attend. Copies should be available on request.

IV. Sequence of reporting complaints involving children.

Physical, emotional, sexual abuse or neglect may be ways in which a child is harmed. If any child, parent, teacher or guardian has any concern for children “at risk”, then they should take action. These reports must be strictly confidential and well documented as per Item #9 and Item #10 in the Code of Practice regarding Children's Activities from Headquarters.

- a) Report the incident to the class teacher or class manager. If you are not confident that they are the appropriate person to contact or if they cannot resolve the issue or they feel it is of such a serious nature, then:
- b) Send a report to the Youth Coordinator (per III.b). If the incident is deemed to be beyond their scope of authority, then:
- c) Call the Police and/or Child Protective Services and report the incident. At the same time:
- d) Inform the Branch Committee in Executive Session.

Adopted March 2003