

## Old Farmer's Ball Complaint Policies - SUMMARY

The OFB has established Organizational Values as well as Dance Behavior & Etiquette Guidelines, which are available separately from this document. Central to our values is respect for individuality, including gender expression, sexual identity, race and cultural heritage, religious affiliation, physical dis-/abilities, and more.

We aim to protect our community from future harm, and to help individuals recognize and improve their interactions. We aim to model best practices for resolving disputes in a positive and constructive manner. Transparency and accountability are prime among the values of the organization and are reflected in our policies and procedures. We aim to take appropriate action in a timely way.

**Respect for the Complainant.** We support victims. We encourage participants to report discomforting, offensive, or harmful behavior, and we take reports seriously. We aim to be sympathetic and sincere.

Inappropriate behavior is defined as behavior that injures, intimidates, harasses or otherwise harms people in our community:

**Low-Level Complaints** - (*Bad Dance Etiquette*) - generally can be corrected with education leading to increased awareness:

- Lifting and dipping without permission
- Dancing too closely/intimately without permission
- Hand grabbing/leading too forcefully/holding onto hands too long
  - This includes spinning too forcefully or forcing a spin
  - Continuing to lead moves that have been verbally or nonverbally declined
  - Dancers throwing themselves into moves that not led
- Flourishes that are disruptive to others (using too much space, "selfish" dancing, etc.).
- Not taking "no" for an answer, pressuring/complaining about a response

**Medium Level Complaints** - (*to be treated as Low or High Level on a case-by-case basis*):

- Unwanted flirting or attention
- Pursuing romantic relations between a minor and someone over the age of 18
- Interfering with dance hosts, musicians, staff, or volunteers at an event.
- Dancing While Impaired
- Disrespecting someone's individuality
- Harassment on social media platforms, text spamming, or other forms of harassment that do not occur at a specific OFB event location.
- Patterns of repeated lower-level offense, with little indication of remorse or intent to improve

**High-Level Complaints** - at or outside of dances. (*Personal Harm, Destruction of Property*) - may warrant an immediate suspension, and possibly a permanent ban:

- Stalking
- Sexual harassment
- Threats of violence or other harm
- Physical/sexual assault
- Criminal activity, theft, vandalism

**Respect for someone named in a complaint:** We also recognize that many situations have conflicting perspectives of what happened. We recognize the possibility of false accusation, or an accusation based on mis-perception, and that being falsely accused is another form of victimization.

- Complaints must be specific enough to identify an offending behavior.
  - Complaints about general demeanor may be documented but are not actionable.

- Individuals named in a complaint shall be informed of the specifics of the complaint lodged against them, and they shall have the opportunity to respond in full.
  - If a complainant wishes to remain anonymous, and if discussing the details of the behavior will reveal the complainant's identity, then anonymity may make the complaint unactionable.
- As much as possible, we aim to give warnings and opportunities to improve before being permanently banned.
  - Low level offenses should result in multiple warnings before any penalties are applied. However, a pattern of offenses, whether high or low level, with little or no improvement, may be cause for suspension or ban.
    - If multiple low-level complaints are lodged after-the-fact (as a "me-too" result of an initial complaint), the collected accusations constitute a first warning, unless there is evidence that previous warnings and improvement efforts have been made by other Leaders.
    - For high-level complaints, the merit of after-the-fact accusations is determined by the Board, and may warrant immediate suspension.

**Additional Policies:**

- Becoming volatile during discussion of a Low-level incident may immediately escalate the complaint to a High-level, with immediate consequences, including a temporary suspension and follow-up by the Board.
- The OFB Board is not a forum to resolve personal disputes that occur outside of dance events except in situations where the dispute directly impacts an OFB event. If deemed appropriate for involvement, Board response is for the purpose of protecting participants at future OFB events from potential harm. The OFB does not impose consequences for the purpose of personal redress.
- The Board or designated committee should make every effort to resolve a referred complaint within 30 days.
- Final OFB resolution will take the result of legal action into consideration.
- Scope of OFB Review - The OFB is not an investigative body and does not have the staff or other resources to conduct an investigation. It is the responsibility of the parties involved to submit information to the Board if they wish it to be considered (generally, within 14 days, so the Board has time to review the complaint within the 30 day goal).
- While the above policies guide decision-making, the OFB Board has the right to immediately suspend or permanently ban someone from OFB events if the Board believes they pose a harm to the community.
- Appeal Procedure:
  - May be requested in writing by the primary parties.
  - Should include new information that was not previously considered.
  - Should document fulfillment of any agreements were made to resolve a complaint (action by one of the parties that would enable a change of status).
  - If the complaint is withdrawn, the Board may reconsider previous decisions.
- All complaints, responses, and relevant information should be documented and saved for organizational memory.
- Non-Admit List for Events - A list of all individuals who are banned or currently suspended will be provided to the leaders of each OFB event.
- Public Disclosure - Upon inquiry, the non-admit list may be made available to **Leaders** of other traditional dance and music communities. The list shall not be made available to the general public. See Handbook for more details.

This complaint response process is a "living" document / policy which is continually fine-tuned as needed. The OFB Board welcomes feedback about the process. If anyone is dissatisfied with how an incident was handled, feedback should be submitted via the OFB website: <http://oldfarmersball.com/policy-feedback/>

## Implementation: Managing Complaints:

The person reporting the complaint will be asked to describe the nature of the complaint, if anyone witnessed the behavior, and action they can suggest to resolve the complaint.

The OFB Host receiving the complaint will determine its severity and should respond as follows:

### Low Level Complaint:

- a. Document the complaint using the Complaint Form. The form guides the Host through all the information that is to be collected.
- b. If the Host is unable to address the complaint at the time, it should be forwarded to the appropriate person for follow-up. (Each OFB event has a "chain of command" for following-up).
- c. If the Host is able to do so, they may discuss the complaint with the person-named at the time the complaint is received, referring to our Organizational Values and Behavior & Etiquette Guidelines. Confirm that the person understands the complaint and will take steps to correct their behavior. OR, if they dispute the complaint, the parties may agree to disagree. The person-named should be informed that the incident is being documented. While they do not have to agree with the complainant, a pattern of repeated complaints may be cause for further action.
- d. The response should be documented on the Complaint Form and forwarded to the appropriate person for retention. A copy should be offered to the both parties.

**Mid-Level Complaint:** Choose high or low level response, at the dance Host's discretion.

### High Level Complaint:

High level complaints should be handled by the Event Leaders or the OFB Board, and should be managed outside of a regular event. The person-named should be contacted to set up a time to meet to discuss the complaint and work through a constructive problem-solving process to reach a resolution. (See full handbook and training materials for details regarding that process). The policies listed above should guide decisions regarding warnings, suspension, and banning.

### At an event in progress:

- A host receiving a high-level complaint should document it using the Complaint Form, then forward it to the appropriate person to be addressed outside the event.
- **If the person-named is volatile, impaired, or represents any potential immediate harm, they should be removed from the event immediately.**
  - The Host should involve additional OFB Leaders immediately for witnesses and support.
  - A refund of admission should be offered.
  - The individual should be informed that they are suspended until further notice.
  - A copy of this Policy Summary should be offered, and they should be informed that the OFB Complaint Policy Handbook will guide the Board's further response. The Handbook is available on the OFB website.
- Contact information should be documented, if possible, in order to follow up with a constructive problem-solving process. If we are unable to contact the individual, the suspension will not be able to be addressed and will remain in effect. According to policies, suspension pending final resolution should not exceed 30 days, except in extraordinary circumstances.

If you are involved in a pending complaint, you may contact the OFB Board to inquire about progress in addressing it, by e-mailing [safety@oldfarmersball.com](mailto:safety@oldfarmersball.com) or [president@oldfarmersball.com](mailto:president@oldfarmersball.com).