

RIVER CITY RHYTHM
CODE OF CONDUCT

Updated October 2026

MISSION STATEMENT

To educate and inspire lifelong excellence in young people through unique opportunities in the performing arts.

VISION

To offer life-changing educational experiences and build community through performances that create a more connected world.

OUR VALUES

COMMUNITY
The importance of social connections, collaboration, and support among individuals and groups. It reflects a commitment to fostering relationships, encouraging inclusivity, and building a sense of belonging.

HEALTH AND SAFETY
The dedication to creating a safe, healthy, and supportive environment. This commitment not only safeguards individuals but also enhances overall organizational effectiveness, employee morale, and reputation.

EQUITY, DIVERSITY, AND INCLUSION
The essentials for fostering an environment where all individuals feel respected, valued, and empowered.

EDUCATION
The significance of learning and knowledge in shaping individuals and society. It advocates for the belief that education is fundamental to personal development, social progress, and economic advancement.

FINANCIAL SUSTAINABILITY
The commitment to managing its financial resources in a way that ensures long-term viability and stability.

EXCELLENCE
The commitment of individuals or organizations to pursue the highest standards in their work, behavior, and outcomes. It involves a dedication to quality, continuous improvement, and a relentless pursuit of success, regardless of the field or industry.

This Code of Conduct applies to everyone involved with River City Rhythm ("RCR"), including all participants, staff, volunteers, contractors, and any additional RCR personnel. Everyone must follow this Code of Conduct to stay in good standing with RCR. The policies in this Code of Conduct aim to ensure safe environments and experiences during all RCR activities.

This Code of Conduct explains what behavior is appropriate or inappropriate. While it cannot cover every possible situation, everyone must follow the letter and spirit of these guidelines to stay in good standing with RCR.

Definitions of Parties

- **Adult participant:** A person 18 years of age and over performing with a group.
- **Minor participant:** A person under 18 years of age performing with a group.
- **Staff:** A person engaged by a group in an instructional or administrative role.
- **Volunteer:** A person who freely gives their time to RCR and provides support in any capacity.
- **Contractor:** A person who provides occasional services for a fee.
- **RCR personnel:** A person engaged to perform services for or on behalf of RCR.
- **RCR board member:** A person who serves on the RCR Board of Directors.

RCR will not tolerate conduct that violates its policies. Even if an action was not intended to violate this Code of Conduct, RCR prioritizes the actual impact of the action over the person's intentions to prevent negative experiences.

In addition to upholding this Code of Conduct, RCR can review and may take interim action against anyone involved in or accused of unlawful activities related to their participation in RCR or the marching arts.

All parties should consider themselves ambassadors of RCR. They are expected to uphold these policies, remind others of them when necessary, and report alleged violations.

Alcohol and Drug Policy

RCR parties have the right to participate in an environment free of alcohol, drugs, and other substances. Prohibited substances include narcotics, marijuana, products containing THC, inhalant drugs, and over-the-counter medications unless used with a valid medical prescription. Violations include, but are not limited to:

- Distributing alcohol and prohibited substances to any participant.
- Consuming or being under the influence of alcohol or a prohibited substance while under a participating group's supervision or providing services to RCR in connection with any event or activity, including rehearsals.

- Possessing or distributing alcohol or a prohibited substance on school grounds or any facilities where such activities are prohibited.

Exceptions to this policy may be made on a case-by-case basis by RCR to allow alcohol at specifically sanctioned RCR events. At such allowable events, local regulations are expected to be followed. Prohibited substances remain forbidden at all times.

Anti-Retaliation, Whistleblower, and False Reporting Policy
RCR will not tolerate retaliation against any party who makes a good faith report or threatens to make a good faith report. Retaliatory actions include threatening, intimidating, harassing, coercing, or any other action that could dissuade someone from reporting misconduct. Retaliation does not include good-faith actions lawfully pursued in response to a reported violation.

Any participant knowingly making a false allegation will be subject to disciplinary action. A false allegation differs from an unsubstantiated allegation, which means there is insufficient evidence to determine whether an allegation is true or false. An unsubstantiated allegation alone is not grounds for a Code violation.

Bullying Policy
Bullying means severe behavior directed at a participant that is aggressive and likely to hurt, control, or diminish the participant emotionally or physically, often centering around a real or perceived power imbalance. Examples of bullying include repeated physical, verbal, or social abuse. Physical abuse may refer to hitting, pushing, beating, biting, or other offensive contact. Verbal abuse may refer to ridiculing, taunting, name-calling, intimidating, or threatening to cause harm. Social abuse may refer to using rumors or false statements to diminish someone's reputation or socially excluding someone and asking others to do the same. Bullying may occur in person or virtually through any social or electronic mediums.

Bullying does not include occasional instances of rude or mean-spirited language, conduct arising from a conflict or struggle between persons with incompatible views or positions, or professionally accepted coaching methods of skill enhancement, physical conditioning, team building, appropriate discipline, or improved participant performance.

Confidential Reporting
Reports are made confidentially to RCR. Confidentiality means RCR will know the reporter’s identity but will not share it unless consent is provided or if RCR is legally required to do so. Inaccurate or withheld information will limit RCR’s ability to conduct an inquiry and respond.

Fraternization Policy

RCR maintains a strong position on fraternization between all parties. Fraternization means any close personal relationship that goes beyond a professional working relationship and can include romantic or intimate relationships, excessive socializing, and favoritism. Examples include:

- Sexual or romantic relationships between staff/volunteers and minor participants are prohibited.
- Establishing a new sexual or romantic relationship between staff/volunteers and adult participants while working with the same group is prohibited. Additionally, establishing a new sexual or romantic relationship between any party where there is a real or perceived power imbalance is strongly discouraged.
- Fraternization between adult participants and minor participants is strongly discouraged and may be illegal.
- Already existing relationships between staff and participants are not encouraged but are not forbidden. These relationships must be managed to address potential conflicts or power imbalances.
- Any relationship that puts any party at risk of harm is prohibited.

General Conduct Policy

The experience of each party and the reputation of RCR depends on the conduct of all parties involved. Good manners, basic decency, and common sense are generally all required to ensure appropriate conduct and behavior. Engaging in conduct or using language that could be perceived as rude, inappropriate, abusive, disorderly, derogatory, immoral, or threatening will not be tolerated. Violations of this policy include, but are not limited to:

- Applying undue and unfair pressure to another party, especially if one party has authority over another.
- Verbally abusing any RCR personnel or board member.
- Inappropriate conduct at housing sites, rehearsal sites, or event venues.
- Disruptive or rude behavior anywhere, anytime during an RCR activity.
- Affiliates of a group, such as parents or spectators, engaging in inappropriate conduct directed at any party.

Harassment Policy

All parties must maintain a safe, respectful, and inclusive environment. Harassment means repeated or severe conduct that causes fear, humiliation, or annoyance and reflects discriminatory bias to establish dominance, superiority, or power over an individual or group based on age, race, ethnicity, gender, orientation, culture, religion, national origin, or mental or physical disability. Harassment also refers to conduct that creates a hostile environment. A hostile environment exists when the conduct is severe or pervasive enough to interfere with, limit, or deprive any individual of the opportunity to

participate in any program or activity. Harassment may occur in person or virtually through any social or electronic medium.

Harassment does not include occasional instances of rude or mean-spirited language; conduct arising from a conflict or struggle between persons with incompatible views or positions.

Hazing Policy
Hazing means any conduct that subjects another person to anything that may endanger, abuse, humiliate, degrade, or intimidate them as a condition of joining or being socially accepted by a group, team, or organization. Consent by the person subjected to hazing is not a defense, regardless of their perceived willingness to cooperate or participate.

Hostile Rehearsal Environment Policy
The rehearsal space is where groups develop creative routines and foster teamwork. A rehearsal environment is defined as periods when the group is practicing under the direct supervision of an authority figure or coordinator. It is a violation of this Code for any party to engage in severe or pervasive conduct that hampers a party's ability to participate meaningfully in the rehearsal environment. Rehearsal environments should remain educational both in the planning and commentary provided to any party. When rehearsal techniques and feedback are no longer educational, a hostile rehearsal environment could be created. Conduct prohibited by this Code, such as harassment, hazing, and bullying, is also prohibited in the rehearsal environment. Additionally, violations of this policy include:

- Creating a rehearsal environment intended to make any party excessively afraid, nervous, or anxious regardless of intention.
- Withholding educational information to achieve skills safely.
- Attacking the personal character of participants rather than aspects of their performance.
- Rehearsing for extended timeframes while purposely withholding, recommending against, or denying adequate hydration, nutrition, medical attention, or sleep.

Sexual Misconduct
Sexual misconduct of any kind will not be tolerated. Offenses include sexual or gender-related harassment, nonconsensual sexual contact, exposing a minor to sexual content/imagery, and sexual exploitation.

- **Sexual or Gender-related Harassment:** Unwelcome sexual advances, requests for sexual favors, unwanted and continued sexual flirtations, and propositions. It also includes sexually degrading words and other conduct of a sexual nature.

- **Nonconsensual Sexual Contact:** Engaging in sexual contact without consent. ● Exposing a Minor to Sexual Content/Imagery: Intentionally exposing a minor to sexually explicit imagery.
- **Sexual Exploitation:** Taking nonconsensual or abusive sexual advantage of another for one's own advantage.

Reporting Instances of Sexual Misconduct

If any party receives information suggesting sexual misconduct has occurred, they must report it to RCR immediately. All RCR staff are defined as mandated reporters, meaning they are legally required to report any suspected cases of child abuse, vulnerable adult abuse (for students 18-21), or neglect to the appropriate authorities. RCR will maintain effective policies and procedures for the protection and safety of all parties, including the ability to report suspected sexual misconduct without retaliation.

If any party learns of or suspects child abuse, including sexual misconduct, they must immediately report it to law enforcement, RCR, and comply with other applicable reporting requirements. Reporting to RCR alone is not sufficient.

Social Networking Policy

RCR values the freedom of expression on social networking sites and does not wish to discourage self-publishing or self-expression. However, we expect all parties involved in any capacity in RCR to follow the applicable guidelines and policies. It is important to understand that any posts made on social media, other than from official RCR accounts, are personal and do not represent RCR. Our policy prohibits the use of social media to post or display comments that are vulgar, obscene, threatening, intimidating, harassing, or hostile on account of any protected characteristic under applicable law on platforms controlled by RCR.

RCR-affiliated members and personnel are also expected to avoid conduct or statements that, when reasonably connected to their RCR affiliation, could materially harm RCR's reputation, operations, or relationships. RCR may take appropriate action in such circumstances, consistent with applicable law and RCR policies.

Weapons Policy

To ensure a safe environment for everyone, RCR strictly prohibits the wearing, carrying, storing, or possession of any dangerous weapon that is brought with the intent to intimidate, harm, or otherwise injure individuals or property. Consequences for such violations could include, but are not limited to, removal of the violator from the venue or disqualification of the group from the event or RCR. This is in addition to any weapons-related policies the event venue has.