

English National Ballet School

Access & Participation Statement

Introduction

English National Ballet School (ENBS) seeks to be the first choice for the next generation of international ballet students. Whilst the School is a talent-led organisation and each year more than 300 young dancers audition for one of thirty places in the first year of our course, we work to remove the barriers that would otherwise prevent young people, from anywhere in the world, realising their ambition to join the School and benefit from the world-leading training we provide. We actively strive to recruit, train and support the most talented students regardless of ethnicity, nationality, gender identification, religion, disability, sexual orientations or financial background. This is at the core of the school's values.

The School offers a holistic approach to learning. We aim to nurture and develop talented 'thinking' dancers of the highest standard. Dancers who will bring artistry, understanding and creativity to their work, who will endeavour to create the industry they want to be a part of. Life-long dancers who will be equipped with the skills, knowledge, and tenacity to continuously develop throughout their training and throughout their lives.

ENBS recognises that in Further Education environments, and in elite ballet training in particular, there are under-represented groups, especially amongst students from low-income backgrounds, from areas of the world and country with low participation in non-compulsory education, and some minority ethnic groups. We understand that as leaders in ballet education, ENBS needs to adopt policies and practices which aim to change that. We strive for diversity endeavouring to ensure we never have to turn away any student with talent and aspiration regardless of their background or financial circumstances. Most of our students are from low- or middle-income families and no less than 50% of our students require financial assistance to attend the School.

This is achieved through the support of the UK government funding, in the form of Dance and Drama Awards (DaDAs) and the generous support of trusts, foundations and individuals. The scholarships, bursaries, and financial assistance the School subsequently provides enables talented young people to access first class training.

Through the joint leadership of Artistic Director, Lynne Charles, and Executive Director, Amanda Skoog, a review of future ambitions is underway. This will see new objectives set to enhance participatory opportunities that the School is able to offer and also seek further ways of enabling access to training programmes to be widened.

Maintaining and Broadening Access & Participation

English National Ballet School is committed to providing rich and diverse opportunities for those wishing to train as ballet dancers. In support of this value, the current full-time training course, the professional trainee programme, the associate programme and short courses, are constructed with widening participation in mind.

The School recognises that its London location provides an opportunity to broaden access from under-represented groups, including by ensuring stereotypes about ballet, and elitist training and the costs involved are addressed. It will do so by working with the local Council and other partners to establish how the School can best engage with the communities of socio-economically disadvantaged areas within the borough.

In advance of these opportunities being realised, the School has in recent years undertaken several initiatives including:

- Providing access to scholarships, bursaries and other forms of financial assistance for students.
- A student hardship fund to support students with immediate, short-term financial challenges.
- Providing young male students interested in ballet specific training opportunities as they remain an under-represented group in auditions for the School.
- A new senior leadership structure, including a Head of Wellbeing and Safeguarding, was implemented in August 2019 to ensure a high level of pastoral support for all students. This, along with a growing support staff team, and a new culture of teaching, is enabling improved support for students to ensure that individual needs are being met and individual difficulties are adequately supported. The PSHE curriculum development has better equipped students and help them to cope with the pressures of their chosen pre-professional training.
- The staff and students work with a positive psychology expert and performance psychologist to teach strategies to promote robust mental health and a maintain a positive outlook.
- Further development of the School Student Representative Council to gain a better understanding of student needs, to support them to achieve and progress; to include Student Wellbeing Champions to provide deeper insight into their needs regarding mental health and wellbeing and to influence the development of a whole School wellbeing framework.
- Students have a personal tutor who works closely with them during their course, to support them both academically and pastorally. The breadth of curriculum is continually being developed, including working with world-renowned guest teachers and choreographers as well as a broad Personal, Social, Health and Economic education. The contextual studies curriculum has been developed to include greater focuses on the contributions of dancers and

choreographers of colours, and theoretical perspectives to examine critically dance practices both historically and in the present.

- We offer a range of support for students including an expanded Health Care team with specialist physiotherapists, nutritionists, dietitians, performance psychologists, strength and conditioning coaches, a Pilates teacher and a growing counselling service that draws from a range of professional therapists from both non-dance and dance backgrounds.
- We conduct student surveys twice a year to provide data and feedback on all aspects of their training. This enables us to adjust the curriculum and how we work with our young people where possible to better support their needs.
- The School's international reputation in ballet training helps students in realising their employment ambitions despite the highly competitive marketplace for the limited number of contracts in ballet companies.

Strategic Objectives

Building on the achievements made in recent years the School has identified the following accessibility objectives for the next academic year:

Introduction of Access & Participation Data Management Systems

The School believes there is strong evidence to demonstrate the commitment the School makes to students through the financial support it offers, the Dance and Drama Awards, and bursaries enables access to the School for those from disadvantaged backgrounds.

However, the School needs to better record and analyse data on gender, ethnicity, nationality, English for Speakers of Other Languages (ESOL), learning difficulties, and disadvantaged backgrounds. Doing so will enable it to not only evidence existing student profiles but monitor year on year to see if steps taken to improve access are having the desired results and what trends emerge over time.

Continuing Existing Outreach Work

The school has healthy relationships with the local community in the Royal Borough of Kensington and Chelsea taking ballet to diverse audiences in local institutions. The establishment of a partnership with CW+, the charity of Chelsea and Westminster Hospital NHS Foundation Trust to give patients and staff exclusive access to ballet performances, classes, rehearsals and talks. During the Covid-19 pandemic, the students performed via Virtual Connections, the charity's digital platform that delivers their award-winning Arts in Health programme to their patients. With the easing of COVID-19 restrictions, students performed extracts from their own choreography as well as elements from the School's Winter Showcase and Summer Performance in the hospital to patients and staff. This outreach work is not only a rewarding experience for the hospital staff and patients, as well as the ENBS staff and students involved, it also holds the potential to grow a more diverse audience for the school's performances and future outreach programmes.

Establishing New Outreach Programme

Historically the school had a large community class programme offering courses and training not readily found in the state sector. This provided rich opportunities for talented young people from diverse backgrounds, laying the foundation with the hope dancers might progress over time to our full-time course. However, due to the Covid-19 pandemic and the school's planned, later aborted move to the company's new facilities at London City Island, this programme was disbanded. Now the school will remain in its current locale for the foreseeable future, the school is seeking to redevelop these classes.

ENBS's home is in the Royal Borough of Kensington and Chelsea, an area of London usually associated with affluence. However, the borough has an alarming number of families and especially children that face severe deprivation. It has the worst rate of income inequality in all London Boroughs, over 37% of children living in poverty, with twice as many state school children being eligible for free school meals compared to the national average and nearly a quarter of working residents earning less than the London Living Wage. For example, The World's End Estate very near where the School is located, is a 1970's high-rise social housing development of 750 homes. The estate has average household income of £15,000 pa (*The Guardian*, 2017). The estate's Primary School has 35.4% of pupils on Free School Meals and 43% of pupils with English as a second language.

ENBS is working to develop weekly classes and a series of workshops. The activities offered as part of the programme will introduce young participants and their families from diverse backgrounds in the local area to ballet encouraging an interest in the art form. We hope the programme will educate, teach, energise and inspire young people, exposing them to the joys and the power of dance. Giving children, who often wouldn't otherwise have an opportunity to participate in dance, the platform to explore their creativity through dance.

The programme aims to broaden and diversify dance audiences and inspire young people. This, in turn, we hope will diversify the range of dancers who have the opportunity to enter vocational ballet training and graduate to become professionals in the sector.

Review of ESOL Support & Teaching Resources

It is important that a School with an increasingly international profile and student mix ensures that it offers appropriate support for EAL and other students with specific needs. The school is developing a pre-sessional introductory course focusing on preparing international students for life in the UK. This would consist of daily ESOL IELTS preparation classes, an introduction to London both in terms of practical tips for incoming students, and cultural exploration, with visits to historic sights and trips to the West End. This kind of preparation for international students will help with their English language skills and cultural understanding to make sure students are not facing barriers to learning and realising their full potential.

Who We Are

English National Ballet School is a Registered Charity (No. 800512) and a Registered Company (No. 2319478) in England and Wales. Our registered office is Carlyle Building, Hortensia Road, London, SW10 0QS. English National Ballet School is registered as a Data Controller under the Data Protection Act 1998 with the Information Commissioner's Office (ICO) (No. Z9664670). English National Ballet School is committed to following the GDPR requirements and respecting any data processed which belongs to a data subject.

Document Change History

This is version 4.0 of the English National Ballet School Access & Participation Statement. This statement is for internal and external use.

This statement is subject to regular revision and maintained electronically. Electronic copies are version controlled.

Version: 1.0	Date: 03/01/2020
Section Title	Change
Whole Document	Policy Created
Version: 2.0	Date: 16/07/2020
Section Title	Change
Introduction	Revised to update School's location as remaining in RBKC
Section 2	Revised to incorporate new partnerships
Version: 3.0	Date: 12/05/2022
Section Title	Change
Introduction	Revised to better reflect the school's values
Maintaining and Broadening Access & Participation	Revised to update current initiatives
Version: 4.0	Date: October 2023
Section Title	Change
Whole document	Revised to update post Covid 19