

English National Ballet School

Appropriate Physical Contact in Dance Teaching

Introduction

English National Ballet School (ENBS) recognises that, there are occasions when it is appropriate and necessary for staff to have physical contact with students, but it is essential that such contact aligns with their professional role. Adopting a 'no touch' approach is impractical for most teaching staff and may even be inappropriate in some circumstances. Teaching dance is a physical activity, and appropriate physical contact between students and teachers in class is, at times, extremely beneficial to training. However, we recognise that there is a need for absolute clarity and understanding around what is and is not necessary.

When staff members engage in physical contact with students, it should be done in response to the students' needs, of limited duration, and appropriate. Staff are expected to use their professional judgement regarding the appropriateness of any physical contact. If a teacher wishes to demonstrate with a student, for example in Pas de Deux, they should always ask the student if they can demonstrate with them prior to doing so.

Any physical contact should never be secretive, or for the gratification of the adult, or represent a misuse of authority. If a member of staff believes that an action could be misinterpreted, the incident and circumstances should be reported promptly to the Executive Director or Designated Safeguarding Lead.

ENBS recognises that physical contact is a potentially complex area; and the School also fully recognises its responsibilities for safeguarding students and teachers and for protecting their welfare. Students, parents, and teachers should report any concerns to the Executive Director or Designated Safeguarding Lead.

This policy sits alongside our Safeguarding Policy, our Staff Code of Conduct and the continued commitment of ENBS to safeguard our students and encourage the safeguarding and wellbeing of students and staff.

We will ensure that:

- Teachers are aware of the relevant issues related to hands on corrections and are always professional in the use of this established teaching protocol relating to the teaching of dance.
- Physical corrections or demonstrations will be with hands only, always avoiding private areas of the body, and without the use of unnecessary force.
- Teachers will not use hands on correction in situations where they are not in the presence of other teachers or students, or if a student has made a particular request that this type of correction is not used.
- Teachers are encouraged to first provide students with verbal feedback, and then demonstrate on themselves where appropriate, before applying hands on corrections.
- When necessary and where feasible teachers should not surprise a student by initiating touch from behind.
- Whenever feasible teachers will accompany touch with a verbal explanation to support the student's understanding about the purpose for the use of touch.
- Teachers will consider any physical contact with due sensitivity and care for the student.

Demonstrations

In cases where a teacher plans to demonstrate a technique involving multiple points of physical contact, such as lifts in a Pas de Deux class, another teacher must be present throughout the demonstration. Additionally, explicit permission must be obtained from the student beforehand. Teachers should inquire at the beginning of class which students are willing to participate in demonstrations and obtain individual consent as needed.

One-to-one Sessions

During one-to-one sessions, such as coaching sessions, teachers should minimise hands-on corrections whenever possible. However, recognising that this may not always be feasible or in the student's best interest, teachers should ensure transparency when scheduling such sessions. They should be conducted within regular school hours, in open spaces like studios, and included in the timetable.

Under 16s

Students, and parents if the child is under 16 years, can expect appropriate touch to be used as part of their dance training.

A student under 16 years, or their parent, who has concerns about touch should speak to or write to the Courses and Widening Participation Manager in the first instance. You can inform us of your preferences at any time whilst your child is with us. Any relevant information you provide will be shared with the appropriate teaching staff.

Document Change History

This is version 3.0 of English National Ballet School's Appropriate Physical Contact in Dance Teaching Policy. This policy is for internal and external use.

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

Version: 1.0	Date of Change: 27/01/2023
Section Title:	Change:
Whole Document	Policy created in consultation with students
Version: 2.0	Date of Change: 11.03.24
Section Title:	Change:
Whole Document	Policy updated in consultation with teaching staff
Version: 3.0	Date of Change: 08/04/26
Section Title:	Change:
Whole Document	In line with feedback from CDMT Reaccreditation. Consideration for under 16s to incorporate short courses and associates.