

Appropriate Physical Contact in Dance Policy

Teaching classical ballet is a physical activity and appropriate physical contact between students and teachers in class is essential to ballet training. Teachers can make physical contact with a student to illustrate a concept or to adjust a student's alignment (especially with the younger students). Ballet posture often requires adjustment of the rib-cage and the buttock area simultaneously and it is sometimes necessary to touch the inner thigh, especially with younger students.

In pas de deux rehearsals, teachers will be demonstrating with students in ways which will involve supporting and lifting. In choreographic teaching, teachers demonstrate positions and movements to the students by moving parts of the students' bodies and by moving dancers in relation to each other: this often involves a considerable amount of physical contact with students.

West London School of Dance recognises that such 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.

The following principles and procedures are in place to fulfil the School's obligations:

- a) Contact by the teacher is made with particular awareness of the needs of each individual, to assist the dancer in correcting placement.
- b) All teachers will treat any physical contact with relevant sensitivity and care, and with due regard for the wishes of the student.
- c) Contact will not involve force or the use of any instrument.
- d) Teachers will be mindful of location and avoid situations where they are isolated with a student; all classes are held in studios and dance areas with windows.
- e) Students are encouraged to discuss any worries with any member of staff or an Independent Listener.
- f) Both students and teachers are encouraged to report any concerns to the Artistic Director or the Designated Safeguarding Lead.
- g) During periods when social distancing is mandatory (such as the Covid-19 pandemic) teachers will maintain the required distance from students and no physical contact will occur. When more specific and in depth physical feedback and explanation is required students can use their own hands to make appropriate adjustments with verbal guidance from the teacher.

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