



Appropriate Contact in Dance Policy 2024 - 2025

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Responsibility: Principal Samantha Bell, Vice Principal Fiona Forfar

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Teaching dance is a physical activity and appropriate physical contact between students and teachers in class is essential to a student's training and development. It is recognised that a level of physical contact exists in the day-to-day teaching of dance, as well as between students as part of the course.

During class, a teacher may use touch to correct a student's posture, placement of limbs or guide a movement as in choreography, for example. Teachers are expected to use touch in a meaningful and direct way with appropriate contact and physical pressure. Teachers are encouraged to think about whether the correction they are making, or the point they are trying to explain can be made clearer in another way. For example, if the correction is anatomical then teachers might refer to a diagram or a digital image on a computer or if it is a physical correction, demonstrate on themselves. Touch can be used as a teaching tool when it is the most effective method to support learning. Teachers should aim to use touch when and where it is most useful.

Students, and parents if the child is under 16 years, can expect appropriate touch to be used as part of their dance training. Teaching staff all follow the same basic guidance:

- When appropriate seek agreement with the student in advance for the use of touch
- Whenever feasible accompany touch with a verbal explanation to support the student's understanding about the purpose for the use of touch
- Consider any physical contact with due sensitivity and care for the student
- Never intentionally touch the groin or breast areas
- Where feasible do not surprise a student by initiating touch from behind
- Avoid using an object to touch a student
- If a student refuses to be touched or indicates discomfort with touch, refrain from the activity
- If you have any concerns about how a student has responded to touch or the invitation to be touched you should report this to the Designated Safeguarding Lead

In Pas de Deux classes and contact work, teachers may be required to demonstrate in a way which will involve supporting and lifting students and may require touch or making contact in order to prevent a fall or injury to the students involved.

Teachers at ElliTe Studios College are required to:

- Ensure they use a range of teaching tools other than touch, such as imagery and visualisation, demonstration, and discussion
- Be sensitive to gender, age and cultural issues – many Asian cultures, for instance, are used to more personal space
- Touch in a professional and unambiguous manner
- Ensure touch is firm, direct and necessary, using a flat hand and with a clinical nature
- Avoid: close physical contact around the pelvis; use of sharp finger nails; 'tickling' to produce sensation; touch of the head, face or hair
- Avoid damaging touch such as forced stretching, use of excessive force to help a movement or hitting arms and legs to remind about a correction
- Check that learning has occurred through this action and if not, try to convey understanding in a different way
- Use eye contact to monitor how the student is responding to contact and be sensitive to their response

A student under 16 years, or their parent, who has concerns about touch should speak to or write to the Principal in the first instance. You can inform us of your preferences at any time whilst you/your child is with us. The information you provide will be shared with the relevant teaching staff but will not be discussed with students in class or in front of other students.

Teachers are reminded to familiarise themselves with the Staff Code of Conduct which all teachers and guest teachers must sign and adhere to in advance of their employment. All teachers maintain updated DBS checks and safeguarding training.

Students, parents, and teachers should report any concerns to the Principal or Designated Safeguarding Lead.