


Policy for the Use of Touch in Dance Teaching at Central School of Ballet

The logo for Central School of Ballet, featuring the text "Central School of Ballet" in white on a teal square background.

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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. For example, touch will be required for some aspects of the curriculum such as Pas de Deux to complete the Higher Education 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 of pupils who are under 16 years, can expect appropriate touch to be used as part of their dance training. Central staff all follow the same basic guidance:

- The use of touch relies upon a relationship of trust between the teacher and student, teachers are discouraged from initially using touch when working with students who are new to them
- When a teacher's practice involves the fundamental use of touch, the teacher will explain why they are taking this approach, and students will be able to choose not to participate
- 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 (Jo Hurst) or Deputies (Anna Brodrick/Chris Imrie)

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.

Touch will be used as a teaching tool within practical classes. However, if for whatever reason, a student enrolled on a Higher Education course needs additional considerations to be put in place around the use of touch with teachers and/or peers then an individualised extension to the learning agreement (ELA) may be developed with the student, if deemed necessary. The ELA will be shared with appropriate teachers and staff to ensure consistent support for the needs of the individual.

A student under 16 years, or their parent, who has concerns about touch should speak to or write to the Associate School and Short Courses Manager 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.

At Wessex Studios there are windows into all learning spaces which means that teaching is always visible from outside of the studio or teaching area. Teachers are reminded to familiarise themselves with Central School of Ballet's Staff Code of Conduct which all teachers and guest teachers must sign and adhere to in advance of their employment at Central School of Ballet. All teachers maintain updated DBS checks and safeguarding training.

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