

Physical Contact in Dance Policy

Author/ Checked :	CFL /JM/LB
Date	June 2023
Approved by	BP
Issue Date	05/06/2023
Next Review Date	June 2024

1. Introduction

Teaching dance is a physical activity and appropriate physical contact between participants/company members and practitioners in class is essential to training. Practitioners can make physical contact with a participant to illustrate a concept or to adjust a participant's alignment (often this is especially relevant with the younger participants who have less ballet experience). Correcting posture often requires adjusting the rib-cage and the buttock area simultaneously and it is sometimes necessary to touch the inner thigh. In classes, practitioners may sometimes need to demonstrate with participants in ways that involve supporting and lifting. In choreographic teaching, practitioners demonstrate positions and movements to the participants by moving parts of the participants' bodies and by moving participants in relation to each other and this often involves a considerable amount of physical contact.

Physical contact is also an essential component of the appropriate provision of costuming/fitting, First Aid or Sports Therapy, for the means of assessment or treatment of injuries or illness. Where physical contact is necessary, the practitioner should be able to explain the reason.

2. Purpose

National Youth Ballet understands that such physical contact is a potentially complex area, and also fully recognises its responsibilities for safeguarding participants and teachers and for protecting their welfare. The purpose of this policy is to set out expectations and principles regarding appropriate physical contact in dance.

3. Physical Contact

The following principles and procedures are in place to fulfill National Youth Ballet's obligations:

- i. All practitioners will treat any physical contact with due sensitivity and care, and with due regard for the wishes of the participant. All practitioners will seek consent before correcting a young participant physically. If consent is withheld the practitioner will respect the participant's wishes.
- ii. For the avoidance of doubt, it is always important to ask for consent before engaging in physical contact. For example; "Is it ok for me to correct you?" or "Can I help adjust your posture?" and never to approach a young person from behind. A young person may not want to be touched for all sorts of reasons, all of which are valid and should be respected. Requesting consent gives them the option to say 'no' to unwanted physical contact.
- iii. When physical contact may be made, it is also important to be clear about where you will be touching them. For example: 'Is it ok if I put my hand on your hips to adjust your pelvis?' In this way the practitioner is as clear as possible about what will happen and why.
- iv. Contact by the practitioner is made with particular awareness of the needs of each individual participant, to assist the participant in correcting placement.
- v. Contact will not involve force or the use of any instrument.

- vi. Practitioners will be mindful of location and avoid situations where they are isolated with a participant; all classes should be held in studios and dance areas with windows and/or an open door.
- vii. Contact by the NYB Sports Therapist will only be made if parental consent is given. The Sports Therapist will contact the parent / carer for permission to practise, outlining findings and treatment plan and then request consent for treatment by email. NYB's Sports Therapist will always administer treatment in the presence of a chaperone.
- viii. As practitioners, adults and leaders in the rehearsal studio you have the ability and responsibility to create a safe space to allow young people to voice their concerns. Participants should be encouraged to discuss any worries with the Safeguarding and Support Team Manager or any member of the pastoral staff or an independent listener.
- ix. Both participants and practitioners should report any concerns to the Creative Director, or the designated Safeguarding Lead.

Links to Other Policies

Safeguarding Policy
Code of Conduct

NYB Values	
Safe	We champion healthy and sustainable practice.
Nurturing	We contribute to a mutually positive and nurturing experience.
Respectful	We are respectful of each other, and show this in our interactions with everyone; both online and in person.
Inclusive	We value diversity and proactively seek to create an inclusive environment for all stakeholders.
Communal	We are a community and we grow from our shared experience.
Creative	At our core we are creative and collaborate in our creative process.
Challenging	We challenge perceptions about what ballet is and conventions about who ballet is for.
Sustainable	We acknowledge that there is a climate emergency. We are action-oriented and committed to using our influence, resources and skills to be a positive force for change.
Exceptional	We work hard to create high quality educational and dance experiences.

