



LONDON VOCATIONAL
BALLET SCHOOL

**Performing Arts Training
Physical Touch Policy**

Introduction

This policy is written in conjunction with KCSIE 2024 and the school's staff handbook including code of conduct, Managing Allegations and Whistleblowing and Low level concerns policies.

Dancing is a physical skill, and in order to help facilitate students' learning, at times physical contact between teacher and student is necessary. This may take the form of physical correction/guidance, or assistance with partnering in dance. Physical touch may also take place in Drama and Singing lessons, in order to facilitate the students' learning. Touch may also be necessary when fitting costumes for performances, and will always be limited to helping students with things they cannot do themselves, for example doing up costumes that have fastenings in the back. If first aid is needed, only essential physical touch will take place.

In all cases, teachers will treat any physical contact with due sensitivity and care, and will always follow the rules set out in this policy and in the Safeguarding Policy, which are there to protect everyone.

Parents and Students are given this policy through the Parent Handbook and via the website. Parents and students also sign a contract agreeing to this form of correction. Students are encouraged to speak to their teacher or a Director they feel comfortable with, if for any reason they are uncomfortable with corrections. In PSHE students are taught about appropriate physical contact and how to raise a concern if they have one.

Purpose

This policy has been created to clearly set out the expectations and principles regarding Physical Touch at LVBS, and exists to protect all students and staff from harm.

Physical contact at LVBS

All physical contact should be for the sole benefit of the student's learning, and be made with caution and care. Students should feel safe and empowered to say 'no' to any physical correction they do not feel comfortable with.

- Physical contact with students should be enacted only with consent. Always ask before any physical contact is made - e.g. 'can I touch your knee to correct you?' - and wait for consent before continuing.
- Explain clearly what you will do and why - e.g. 'I'm going to adjust your knee so it's over your toe in good alignment'.
- Never approach a student from behind.
- Never surprise a student with a correction.
- Sometimes students directly ask for a specific physical correction. Only agree to this if you feel the correction is useful and safe for the dancer, i.e. do not stretch them, even if they ask you to.

- Physical correction should not take place in any sensitive parts of the body: the buttocks, chest area, or anywhere close to their genitalia. The face, neck and head are also sensitive areas and many people do not like to be touched there, therefore caution is advised and active consent should be given.
- Teachers should take into account any injury that the young person may be working with, and exercise caution and care while correcting.
- Physical corrections should be used to guide the student - these should be carried out only within their physical range, i.e. teachers will not force students' bodies into extreme positions with the aim of increasing flexibility or turnout.
- There must be space for the student to either say 'no' to being touched or to say 'stop' when the correction is happening. Teachers will keep checking in with the student.
- If, while giving a correction, you realise that something isn't right or that the correction hasn't gone the way you expected, or you accidentally touch the student in a different place to what was intended, please stop and immediately log this on Confide. This helps everybody have clarity over what exactly happened.
- Occasionally, it may be appropriate to offer physical comfort to a child who is in distress; this should always be with the child's consent and with appropriate touch - ie. a reassuring touch to the shoulder or a one-armed hug.
- Dance, in particular, can mean that students work in partners or in groups and therefore physical contact may take place between students. Staff should be mindful of this and discuss and demonstrate the correct way of partnering or using physical contact in dance that is appropriate and professional. Staff should ensure that all students understand what will happen and consent to physical contact with each other.
- Students will be taught about safe touch in their PSHE lessons. This includes touch by members of staff and touch between students.
- Occasionally, qualified physiotherapists may offer appointments in school, with treatment that involves physical contact. Written parental consent will always be required and the school will provide an appropriate adult chaperone to be present.
- If members of staff or students have any concerns, they should be reported immediately to the Designated Safeguarding Lead and logged on MyConcern / Confide.

Empowering students and maintaining awareness of needs

It is our responsibility as trusted adults to create an environment in which young dancers feel safe and empowered. Members of staff should reiterate wherever possible that students have agency over their bodies and that they are encouraged to clearly articulate their boundaries.

Members of staff should always retain an awareness of each student's individual circumstances and set of needs, and act accordingly. This could relate to a range of specific needs, for example if a student is neurodivergent.

The students at LVBS are going through a lot of changes as they grow up, and may feel very sensitive about their bodies as they go through puberty. Care must be taken to

physically correct the students sensitively, and never in a way that could be seen as negativity or judgement towards their ever-changing bodies.



Staff will remind students whenever possible that it is important that they use their voices and feel confident to 'speak out', if they are ever uncomfortable when being corrected. Students should be encouraged to let a teacher know immediately if they ever feel unexpected discomfort or pain during a physical correction or during partnering. They should understand that this is healthy, respectful and useful communication with a teacher - which will help to guide and inform their practice. Students should be regularly reminded that they must come forward and tell a teacher/Director or someone they trust, if they feel uncomfortable. Students are aware of the processes to raise a concern anonymously - via the student correspondent box, which is regularly checked by the SMT, or the 'post box' to trustees.

Safe Singing Practice



All individual lessons are carried out in school and during the course of the normal school day. Any lessons that are scheduled after school will only be done so with parental consent and fall under the banner of private tuition. A private tuition contract must be signed by the parent/guardian before a student may commence singing lessons, thereby giving permission for the student to take part in one-on-one lessons that may involve physical touch. Singing is a physical skill. It may be necessary at

times to guide the student in physical movements by touch. Any contact is made with sensitivity and care, and following the guidelines above. The teacher will seek consent each time and explain what they are going to do and why. Students should feel able to say 'no' if they are uncomfortable with a correction. Singing lessons will not be recorded visually or aurally unless permission is granted from the parent/guardian and the student.

Drama at LVBS

All drama lessons are taught in school and as part of the curriculum.

Students learn a variety of genres within the context of Drama, and it may be at times that physical movement and contact is part of this process. If physical guidance or touch is necessary then it will be made with sensitivity and care, as per the Physical Contact Guidelines listed above. Particular care will also be shown in games, exercises and rehearsals in which physical contact between students is explored.

This policy is written with the following supporting policies: KCSIE 2024, LVBS Safer Recruitment Policy and Staff Code of Conduct and Professional Behaviour.

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Approval body: LVBS Trustees
Revised date: January 2025
Review Schedule: 1 year
Next review date: January 2026