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# Safeguarding: Safer Touch & Physical Contact Policy

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**Policies and Procedures**

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**bbodance 2024-25**

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# Introduction

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This policy guidance on safe touch and physical contact is to be read alongside the bbodance safeguarding children and safeguarding adults policies. Any deliberate harm to children, young people or adults will be treated as gross misconduct. This policy statement applies to anyone working on behalf of bbodance including senior managers and the board of trustees, paid staff, examiners, volunteers, sessional workers, agency staff and students and they must abide by this guidance, all other appropriate safeguarding guidance and policy and the legislation as outlined in the Children Act 1989, 2004, the Care Act 2014 and the Sexual Offences Act 2003. bbodance staff must recognise the power imbalance between children and staff and ensure that their authority is never misused. Sexual relationships with a child under the age of 18 where the adult is in a position of trust are an offence, even if it is a consensual post 16 relationship.

## Rationale

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As professionals we all have a safeguarding duty to our students. Sometimes our work extends to physical contact with them, be that through administering first aid, through comforting a distressed child or by making important technical corrections to support safe dance practice. Appropriate professional touch is often an essential part of teaching roles and can be beneficial in certain circumstances as a kinaesthetic teaching strategy. It is essential therefore as dance teachers that we have a clear and legitimate purpose in physical contact at class so as not to cause distress and to always adhere to safeguarding policy and guidance.

## Procedure

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At bbodance dance we agree with the following statements and expect all those teaching for us or on our behalf to ensure they:

### Do:

- Ask for consent - except in emergency situations do not touch anyone else without their permission
- Ensure that all touch is explained, professional and unambiguous
- Ensure physical contact is necessary and proportionate to the presenting need, with regard to age, development, gender and ability
- Always consider if the touch is necessary in a teaching context or if the correction could be taught in another way
- Always use professional development opportunities to enhance teaching techniques and explore ways of teaching that do not require physical touch for technical correction
- Avoid touch in private situations and where possible avoid private situations
- Use the student's name: make a connection with them: we are correcting an individual not just their body
- Always consider 'how' you touch not just 'what you touch'

### Do not:

- Become involved with physical 'play' with your students
- Touch people who are not comfortable with touch or who have asked not to be touched

### Always:

- Get to know your students
- Communicate with pupils, parents and staff.
- Be open, honest and keep no secrets
- Know who to contact if you have concerns
- Have full regard for the Safeguarding agenda with an understanding that unwarranted and unwelcome physical touch may be abusive
- Use your professional judgement

- Remember as teachers we are role models to our students our use of touch in dance class will be mirrored by them and understood as acceptable
- Have an alternative class option prepared for students who may not wish to touch other students or take part in group or partner work

## Information sharing

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It is important to remember that an unusual or unexpected reaction to professional touch may be an indicator of abuse in another area of a child's life. Any unusual responses should be recorded and shared in line the bbodance safeguarding children and child protection policy.

If a child discloses an instance of inappropriate, unsafe or illegal touch or as a staff member, contractor or volunteer or you witness unsafe, inappropriate or illegal touch it is your duty to share that information as outlined in the bbodance managing allegations policy.

The designated safeguarding lead for bbodance is Fiona Knowler. Any concerns or queries can be raised to Fiona Knowler.

This policy will be reviewed annually in August.