

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

Reviewed: July 2026

Teaching dance is a physical activity and appropriate physical contact between students and tutors in class can be instrumental to a student's training and development, in addition to verbal instruction, visual demonstration, and peer observation. At Central, we recognise 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 tutor may use touch to correct a student's posture, placement of limbs or guide a movement as in choreography. Tutors are expected to use touch in a meaningful and direct way with appropriate contact and physical pressure. Tutors are encouraged to think about whether the touch intervention 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 tutors might refer to a diagram or a digital image on a computer or if it is a physical correction, demonstrate on themselves.

Tutors will ensure that consent from the student remains active and is not assumed, which can be done through gaining initial verbal consent at the start of the course/ year and asking explicit consent during class. Tutors will not assume that silence, hesitation or compliance constitutes consent. Equally, tutors are expected to understand and rebalance tutor-student power dynamics in a teaching and learning environment.

Students, and parents if the child is under 16 years, can expect touch to be used as part of their dance training as a tool to enhance their learning.

Central staff all follow the same guidance:

- Use default inclusive teaching that includes offering non-touch options and/or explain actions before touching.
- Seek agreement with the student in advance, and repeated, for the use of touch
- 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
- Be aware of cultural and religious boundaries around touch; gender dynamics; and principles of body autonomy
- Avoid sudden touch or touch from behind (Staff assume that students may have unknown trauma histories)
- 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 Deputy Safeguarding Lead (Ben Warbis)

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

Touch can 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 tutors and/or peers then an individualised extension to the learning agreement (ILA) may be developed with the student, if deemed necessary. The ILA will be shared with appropriate tutors 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 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. Tutors are reminded to familiarise themselves with Central School of Ballet's Staff Code of Conduct which all tutors and guest tutors must sign and adhere to in advance of their employment at Central School of Ballet. All tutors maintain updated DBS checks and receive regular consent and safeguarding training.

Students, parents, and tutors should report any discomfort or concerns around the use of touch in dance to the Executive Director or Designated Safeguarding Lead, or students can use the Report and Support Tool online [via this link](#).