



MEPA TRAINING

HANDS ON (TOUCHING) POLICY

THIS POLICY IS WRITTEN FOR AND APPLIED TO MEPA STUDIOS, MEPA ACADEMY AND MEPA COLLEGE .

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1. PURPOSE OF THIS POLICY

This policy outlines the safe, professional, and pedagogically appropriate use of physical contact ('hands-on approach') in teaching dance, musical theatre, and performance disciplines. It ensures that all staff and students are clear on expectations, boundaries, and safeguarding responsibilities.

2. CONTEXT AND RATIONALE

In dance and physical performance training, physical correction, partner work, and spatial alignment are essential components of technical and artistic development. The use of touch, when conducted appropriately and with consent, is a legitimate and necessary teaching tool.

3. GUIDING PRINCIPLES

- Safeguarding and student welfare are always the highest priority.
- All physical contact must be consensual, respectful, and proportionate.
- The use of touch should be purposeful, clearly explained, and relevant to the instruction.
- Students have the right to refuse touch at any time without fear of judgment or consequence.

4. ACCEPTABLE USE OF PHYSICAL CONTACT

Trainers and staff may use brief, non-invasive physical contact for the following:

- Correcting alignment, posture, or muscular engagement.
- Supporting balance or guiding safe movement pathways.
- Demonstrating partnering, lifts, or floorwork techniques.
- Assisting with injury prevention or recovery (e.g., release techniques, physio guidance).

5. INFORMED CONSENT AND STUDENT AWARENESS

- All students will receive verbal and written explanation of the hands-on approach during induction.
- Verbal consent should be sought before each physical correction.
- Students may opt-out of physical contact at any time and are encouraged to communicate boundaries clearly.

6. ALTERNATIVES TO TOUCH

When physical contact is not appropriate or consent is not given, staff must use:

- Verbal cues and descriptive feedback.
- Demonstration using their own body or another consenting demonstrator.
- Mirrors, videos, anatomical diagrams, or other visual aids.

7. PROFESSIONAL CONDUCT

- All staff must avoid:
 - Prolonged, unnecessary, or private physical contact.
 - Any touch that could be perceived as sexual or invasive.
 - Touching sensitive areas (e.g., chest, inner thigh, buttocks).
- Physical contact should always take place in visible, professional learning spaces.

8. STAFF TRAINING AND SAFEGUARDING

- All teaching staff must receive training in:
 - Appropriate use of physical contact in education.
 - Child protection and safeguarding (including KCSIE 2025).
 - Trauma-informed practice and consent-led instruction.
- All concerns or disclosures relating to inappropriate contact must be reported immediately to the Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL).

9. DOCUMENTATION AND ACCOUNTABILITY

- Any instance where a student reacts negatively or expresses concern about physical contact must be logged.
- Repeated refusal of touch should be recorded and respected without pressure.

10. STUDENT RESPONSIBILITIES

- Students must respect the personal space of peers and staff.
- Consent applies to peer work as well – e.g., in lifts, partner exercises, and contact improvisation.
- Students are encouraged to voice concerns to their tutor or the DSL without delay.

11. REVIEW AND EVALUATION

This policy will be reviewed annually by the Safeguarding and Curriculum Leadership Teams to ensure it reflects current practice, legal updates, and student feedback.

RELATED POLICIES

- Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy
- Equality and Anti-Harassment Policy
- Code of Conduct (Students & Staff)
- Risk Assessment for Dance and Movement Disciplines