

LAINÉ

THEATRE ARTS

Policies

Appropriate Physical Touch Policy

APPROPRIATE PHYSICAL TOUCH POLICY

1. INTRODUCTION

Laine Theatre Arts recognises that physical contact between tutors and students is an essential, integral aspect of vocational performing arts training. It plays a vital role in instruction, correction, and performance enhancement. However, all physical contact must be carried out with professionalism, consent, and respect for individual boundaries. This policy establishes clear guidelines to ensure that all physical contact within our institution is safe, appropriate, and supportive of student welfare.

2. GENERAL PRINCIPLES OF PHYSICAL CONTACT

- 2.1. Physical contact is used only when necessary for instruction, demonstration, or safety.
- 2.2. All physical contact must be conducted with consent, professionalism, and sensitivity.
- 2.3. Students have the absolute right to decline physical contact at any time, and their choice must be respected and come at no detriment.
- 2.4. Contact should never involve force, pressure, or any action that could cause discomfort.

- 2.5. Tutors should be mindful of cultural backgrounds, personal preferences, and individual needs when engaging in physical contact.
- 2.6. Physical contact should be explained before it occurs (e.g., “Is it okay if I adjust your hip position to improve alignment?”) this should include eye contact with the student. If for any reason you believe full consent isn't given, no member of staff should engage in touching the student.
- 2.7. Students should be involved in negotiating how and where physical contact occurs, (for example when being lifted) and only carried out where full consent is given.

3. TUTOR TO STUDENT CONTACT

- 3.1. Tutors may use physical contact to correct posture, alignment, balance, or technique.
- 3.2. When possible, corrections should be demonstrated visually or verbally before using touch and touch should be reserved as a last option to correct.
- 3.3. Tutors must ensure that touch is appropriate and should never touch the chest, groin and buttock areas.
- 3.4. Contact should be brief and applied only where necessary for effective instruction.
- 3.5. If a student expresses discomfort, alternative instructional methods must be used.
- 3.6. One-on-one instruction should always take place in visible areas, such as studios with windows or open spaces, to maintain transparency.

4. PEER-TO-PEER CONTACT (PEER TOUCH POLICY)

- 4.1. Unless required to engage in physical contact for dance partnering, group work, and stage performances, Peer on Peer contact for refining movement execution and increasing body awareness, even under tutor supervision, should not be used as a teaching tool.
- 4.2. Partnering classes and physical touch in character and scene work or for performance, are part of the curriculum at Laine Theatre Arts and by joining the course a student recognises and acknowledges this.
- 4.3. In the cases described above; dance partnering, characterisation and scene work, group performances and stage performances:
 - 4.3.1. Consent must always be sought between peers before engaging in any physical contact.
 - 4.3.2. Tutors should facilitate discussions on safe and appropriate touch during partnering exercises, or exercises which may involve physical touch ensuring that students communicate their comfort levels openly and respect each other's boundaries.
 - 4.3.3. Any activity involving peer contact as described above, should be structured, choreographed, or rehearsed to ensure safety and consent. For example, if a fight director is working on a sequence, they should demonstrate what they want first and then ask if the actors are ok with the sequence. They should then carefully choreograph the sequence placing in all safety parameters for each moment of physical contact. Scenes that involve 'romantic' or 'sexual interaction' (such as kissing) are handled in a step-by-step process where consent and boundaries are established with both parties. This also applies in dance partnering where each point of contact between two students

during partner work should be choreographed step by step including detailed explanation of where hands should be placed with consent from both parties being sought throughout.

4.3.4. If discomfort arises during an exercise, students should be encouraged to speak up and seek assistance from a tutor and this must be clearly communicated by the tutor at the start of the session. Consent can be withdrawn at any time and staff should be aware of this and not apply any pressure to a student who withdraws consent.

5. INDIVIDUALISED CONSIDERATIONS FOR PHYSICAL CONTACT

5.1. If a student requires additional considerations regarding physical contact with tutors and/or peers, an individual plan may be developed in consultation with the Head of Student Services and relevant staff members.

5.2. The agreement will be shared with appropriate teachers and staff to ensure consistent support while maintaining suitable confidentiality.

6. SAFETY CONSIDERATIONS

6.1. Physical contact should never be used for discipline or coercion.

6.2. Adjustments related to injury prevention, emergency situations (e.g., preventing a fall) or in response to Health and Safety requirements should be made with utmost care and explained afterwards.

6.3. Tutors and students must be aware of any injuries, disabilities, or conditions that may affect an individual's ability to participate in physical contact safely.

6.4. If a student reports feeling uncomfortable, unsafe, or experiences inappropriate contact, they should report it immediately to a tutor or a member of the safeguarding team.

7. STUDENTS UNDER THE AGE OF 18

7.1. Special consideration must be given when working with students under 18 to ensure their safety, comfort, and well-being.

7.2. Any concerns regarding physical contact involving under-18 students should be reported to a member of the safeguarding team as soon as practically possible.

7.3. Parents or guardians should be informed of the physical contact expectations as part of the student's enrolment and training process.

7.4. One-on-one corrections with students under 18 should always take place in an open setting with other students or staff present.

8. REPORTING CONCERNS

8.1. Students and staff are encouraged to report any concerns regarding physical contact to a member of the safeguarding team or a trusted tutor.

8.2. Reports will be handled confidentially and investigated promptly to ensure student welfare.

8.3. Laine Theatre Arts is committed to creating a safe and respectful environment, and any violations of this policy will be addressed appropriately, using the Safeguarding Policy, Staff and Student Code of Conduct, Sexual Misconduct Policy and/or Student Complaints Policy and Procedures as appropriate.

9. REVIEW & UPDATES

9.1. This policy will be reviewed **annually** to ensure best practices are upheld.

9.2. Feedback from students, tutors, and staff will be considered when revising the policy.

DOCUMENT CONTROL

Version:	2
Approved by:	Approved at SMC on 26 th February 2026
Review Interval:	1 Year
Last Review Date:	February 2026
Next Review Date:	January 2027