

Alison Jane Academy of Dance policies

Legislation for safe dance teaching

There are various pieces of legislation that impact an individual as a dance teacher. These all have various different information on how to provide a well rounded, fair and productive dance school.

The Equality Act 2010

The Equality Act 2010 outlines how individuals or groups of people should not be discriminated against whether that be through gender, race, age, religion or disability as well as others. As a dance teacher your aim is to provide equal opportunities to the best of your ability.

The Health and Safety at Work Act of 1974

The Health and Safety at Work Act of 1974 ensures a work environment includes trained staff that are aware of how to follow safety procedures. This includes physical and mental wellbeing of staff and is vital to running any business. As a dance teacher you want your students and staff to remain safe in your dance school. Notices such as fire exit information, accident and first aid information and health and safety letters of intent.

The Child Protection legislation

The Child Protection legislation allows for the safeguarding of all children. Any establishment where children are present must have a safeguarding policy and this information be shared with any staff members. Child protection means that we work to keep children from any mental or physical harm that could occur to them.

Certificate of Completion

This is to certify that

Jemma oneill

**has completed the Essex Safeguarding Children
Board Safeguarding Children Level 1 e-learning
package**

5 January 2023



CERTIFICATE OF COURSE COMPLETION

This is to certify that

Jemma O'Neil

Completed the course

ECIS Level 2 Certificate in Child Protection – Teaching Staff 2022-23

Date

14 September 2022

Learning Hours

1.5



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KAM CHOCHAN
EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR
ECIS

Health and safety statement of intent

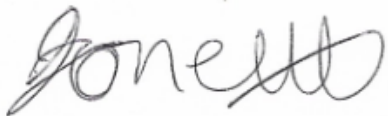
The institute's policy is to provide a safe and healthy environment for all staff, students and anyone visiting the premises. We will provide relevant training and support to anyone for this is applicable. We accept responsibility for the health and safety of people on our premises.

In order to allow this safe and healthy environment the policy will provide:

- Sufficient training.
- Sufficient information e.g. use of equipment.
- Ensure all employees are equipped to avoid hazards.
- Safe storage and use of equipment.

The policy will be reviewed annually and kept up to date with the relevant legislation.

SIGNED

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DATE 8th Jan 2024

Accidents and First Aid

All accidents should be reported to the designated health and safety officer and recorded in the accident reporting book. Ensure you include:

- Time
- Name
- Injury
- Cause and prevention for future use
- Any first aid offered/ administered

Where possible first aid should only be given by a qualified first aider and ALWAYS with the consent of the parent/ guardian. All relevant health information should be stored on record (allergies etc.) in order to prevent unnecessary harm to any student.

Always try to administer first aid when another adult is present, as long as this does not put the child at risk. Ensure to ask relevant questions that should be recorded in secure files such as do they use an inhaler etc.

If you have any doubts about an injury ensure you call NHS services on 111 or emergency services on 999. Ensure you stay with the child and only bring the child to services yourself if asked to do so by medical professionals in exceptional circumstances.

Ensure safety checks are completed:

- Equipment stored correctly.
- No wires in the way of students.
- Any damaged equipment reported to the health and safety officer.
- Floors are clean and dry.
- Ensure mirrors are not broken.
- Ensure a child has been shown clearly how to use equipment.
- Supervision of a child using equipment.
- There are adequate facilities for using the bathroom on site.
- Water is available for all.
- First aid equipment is regularly checked and updated.

Safeguarding Policy

Everyone is responsible for the safeguarding of the children in the academy.

Designated safeguarding lead is Jemma O'Neill

If that person is unavailable and you have a safeguarding concern please contact the NSPCC Child Protection helpline on **0808 800 5000** or if it is an emergency please contact the police on 999.

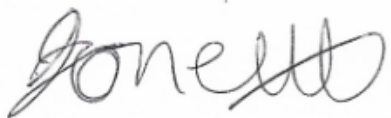
All staff will undergo a safeguarding course and **MUST** provide evidence of the certification of this. All staff must also undergo an extended DBS check, all of these will be kept on file on the premises.

Our aim is to ensure the safeguarding of children against:

- Sexual abuse
- Grooming
- Emotional abuse
- Physical abuse
- Neglect
- Domestic Violence
- Bullying
- Exploitation
- Self Harm
- Radicalisation
- Victimisation

We understand the importance of safeguarding children and will review the safeguarding policy annually.

SIGNED

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DATE 8th Jan 2024

Safe dance environment

Physical hazards

When regarding physical health there are many ways in which a student could be injured if a teacher is not aware of the risks and hazards possible in a dance studio.

Physical hazards can be avoided by ensuring safety checks are in place for the studio and the surrounding areas in the dance school. This includes floors being kept dry and clean and cables of equipment stored appropriately. Following a risk assessment and training staff members on these risks will help prevent hazards and injury.

Risk assessments are completed and updated annually and provided to all staff.

Structure of dance class

Physical harm to a student's body also needs to be prevented when teaching a dance class. Every class should include a warm up and a cool down to prepare the body for exercise and prevent injury when the class is complete. A warm up is essential for the body to start pumping blood and oxygen to the muscles which allows them to prepare for physical exercise. When stretching in class ensure students are not over stretching and causing injury. Educating students on their own bodies is essential when teaching so the student does not cause harm to themselves in and out of class. During classes students should have access to water so they do not dehydrate themselves. Staff should ensure all instructions are clearly given for an exercise so a student does not harm themselves through not completing an exercise correctly. A cool down is essential for the body to relax and prepare for stopping exercise. This should be eased gently from high intensity to low intensity and not rushed. Educating students on what happens after a dance class is also essential. For example, in winter it can cause harm to them if they leave the premises without wearing enough clothing. Putting on tracksuits over a ballet uniform when exiting the building to prevent muscles from seizing up.

Mental wellbeing

Mental health is also essential in this field of work and promoting a healthy lifestyle within that. Being aware of key signs of when somebody is struggling will help prevent issues arising. Promoting a healthy lifestyle can mean conversations with students about what a balanced diet and lifestyle includes and how they can achieve this. Ensuring positive praise is enforced in class rather than negative comments is also another key factor for teaching. Students should receive constructive corrections as opposed to negativity in order to help them to improve.

All of these factors are essential for a student to grow and improve in a healthy and safe environment, learning new skills without causing harm to themselves or others.

Venue and clothing

The venue that your teaching takes place is an important consideration when regarding the safety of your students. In particular, the flooring is important as a sprung flooring is needed to prevent injury for students when jumping etc.

Clothing is also an important factor. Loose clothing can get caught and cause injury, so should be appropriate for the class. Footwear should also be supportive and appropriate. Ballet shoes should be flexible and allow movement throughout the whole foot. When a student is old enough for pointe shoes, they should be bought from an established shop and should be suitable for the individual.

Recognising poor posture

Posture is important in dancing and especially important in ballet. Having a strong core is a foundation for being able to complete more complex steps with strength and accuracy. In ballet the correct posture is the whole body pulled up, turnout muscles engaged, core muscles engaged and with the shoulders down and eyeline up. Your weight should be forward in ballet, with $\frac{2}{3}$ thirds over the balls of your feet.

Identifying when a student has poor posture from lack of strength means that various training exercises could assist with them developing strength. An example of these could include core exercises such as planking and V sits. Engaging the core muscles and strengthening them allows for the student to improve their posture over time.

A student also may have poor posture because of a medical issue and this needs to be identified as early as possible in order to avoid injury. A student may have hypermobility which can affect how they stand, this is usually more obvious in the legs as they almost scoop backwards. It is best to identify this with the student so they learn how their body works and how to work their body to the best of their ability. Another medical issue could be scoliosis which can have an extreme impact on their posture.

Example 1 in practice:

I was teaching a ballet class and noticed a student was repeatedly struggling to keep their shoulders square and level. After suggesting she went to a doctor, she discovered she had scoliosis. This meant she could receive treatment to help assist with this and we were more aware of how her body worked. Ballet has actually been known to improve scoliosis whilst working with a physiotherapist too. All exercises must be completed with supervision and with care so the dancer does not injure themselves.

Example 2 in practice:

I noticed one young student in my ballet class always had hunched shoulders and was struggling to correct this. As the student was young I used the imagery of wearing a crown on her head to help her with standing tall. I also explained how she should try and roll the shoulders back and down and we practiced this as an exercise together. This use of imagery and discussion helped her to not hunch her shoulders and correct her posture for ballet lessons.

Nutrition and Hydration

Effective nutrition and hydration is key for a dancer as part of them leading a healthy and balanced diet and lifestyle.

Nutrition is key for the body to work effectively and to help prevent injury. Muscles need protein so they can heal and repair themselves. This is important when dancers are stretching as the muscle fibres break slightly and then repair stronger. Without enough protein the body can not repair itself. The body also needs energy for physical exercise and this comes from including carbohydrates in your diet. This reaffirms why a balanced diet is vital for a dancer.



Hydration is also important for students to not dehydrate. The brain needs hydration so students can remain focused and on the ball in lessons. The body also uses hydration in the repairing process. Many times students do not drink enough water before and during a dance class and become dehydrated in class. This can lead to them feeling light headed and not having the energy to partake in the lesson in the appropriate way.

Example in practice

When teaching children I have experienced them not understanding their own limits and not understanding when they need to hydrate appropriately. I always encourage students to bring in a water bottle with them and ensure lessons are not exerting anyone to extremes and allow for appropriate water breaks.

Identifying and preventing injuries

Injuries in a dance lesson can vary greatly. Some injuries that may not be so obvious are muscular injuries, these can include pulling a muscle or overstretching or even muscle fatigue. Ways to avoid these injuries are to ensure that all dancers are warmed up fully, are hydrated and have eaten appropriately. Of course, even after taking these precautions injuries can still occur. You should ensure you listen to your students if they think they could have pulled a muscle or have injured themselves in some way. You may also be able to spot if someone is at risk of injuring themselves if they are not completing an exercise safely/ properly. Muscular injuries usually need heat applied to them rather than ice, so first aid kits should include self heating pads too.

Other injuries can include falling on a part of the body, twisting an ankle, bumping a part of the body etc. Identifying an injury and the severity is important. If the student needs emergency assistance should be established as soon as possible. If not then following first aid steps would be required, RICE (rest, ice, compress and elevate) as long as appropriate for the injury.

First aid should only be administered by those that are fully first aid trained/ qualified. All injuries should be reported to the designated safety office and recorded in the appropriate way. Parents should also be informed in order for them to monitor the injury after they leave the premises.

Understanding the physical needs of students

There are many different stages of development for a person within their lifetime. Below I look at some different considerations for different stages in a person's life, looking at both mental and physical developments.

Considerations with children

1. Physical coordination

This can be affected by growth spurts, as children can grow quickly, they take time to be aware of how to use their body and have the strength to support limbs in an appropriate way. Some students develop a sense of coordination at different rates and this needs to be considered. For example skipping is a tricky skill and isn't actually expected for children to be able to execute properly until the age of 6.

2. Concentration

When working with young children it is important to remember that they do not have the attention span of older children. Keeping lessons active, fun and engaging is key for them to learn effectively. Using repetition and short bursts of new information for very young children. This develops over time and as the students grow up.

3. Reactions

Similar to concentration, reaction speeds to music and movement develop as a child grows. Younger students will struggle to show quick reactions and need more time than those that are older.

4. Breathing

Control of breathing is essential for children to engage their muscles and it helps when they come to develop their artistry and musicality. This is harder for younger children as they don't always fully understand their bodies. They also have developing and growing muscles meaning they might not have the strength to control breath in the same way older children and adults do. Making sure children breathe appropriately during dancing is essential by explaining to them and observing properly.

5. Language and expression

Younger children have not got a developed language yet and therefore need instructions explained in an appropriate way for them. Thinking about your tone and expression is also key for younger children too. How you address younger children would be different to older children and adults.

6. Awareness of limits

Younger children sometimes are not aware of limiting their physical exercise and will continue until exhausted. It is necessary to remind them of these limits as well as ensuring they are hydrated and taking appropriate rests.

Considerations of teaching teenagers

I have taught teenagers as well as younger children but also found reading <https://www.onedanceuk.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/03/One-Dance-UK-The-growing-dancer-Physical-challenges-by-Siobhan-Mitchell.pdf> particularly helpful when looking at this topic.

Teenagers experience a growth spurt, usually between the ages of 12 and 18 but can be younger too. Mostly females experience puberty and growth spurts earlier than males and for both it can

cause physical and emotional problems.

It can cause problems developing with their coordination as their limbs begin to change and their strength also changes. This means the accuracy of their movements might have changed and frequently it helps to go back to basics with technique in order to help with this.

Teenagers also can struggle with identifying injuries and when dancing as their bodies change. This lack of awareness can result in muscular injuries and tendon problems. Being vigilant as always in teaching teenagers so this can be prevented is vital as a teacher.

Teenagers going through puberty also means their bodies are changing and this can also bring issues with their body image. Being considerate and aware of this can help a teacher to promote a healthy self image and mental wellbeing. My personal experience as a student and as a teacher is educating students on health and wellbeing throughout lessons is helpful with this issue.

Considerations for teaching adults

Adults have different limitations to their physical developments than children and adolescents.

- They can still injure themselves in similar ways but they also can experience age related injuries such as mobility issues in hips and knees.
- They are also likely to be more limited on movements than younger students and must be aware of their bodies and their personal recovery times.
- Injury times are longer than that of children.
- Their bodies are less flexible than they used to be and this is important for the adult to remember as well, especially when they have a break for dancing and then return to it.

When teaching any age you want to consider each student on an individual basis and ensure all students' needs are met in the lesson to the best of your ability and all students take the class at their own pace that is healthy for them.