



A good quality dance school/organisation is one that values children, and centres its activities around their safety, enjoyment and comfort. Schools/Organisations should strive to develop children's self-esteem, encourage each child to contribute to and participate in activities, and reward their efforts as well as their achievement. An atmosphere built on good relationships, mutual respect and support is less favourable to the development of bullying and other abusive behaviours. Similarly, when children have trusting relationships with teachers, they are more likely to let them know about things that are making them unhappy.

Code of behaviour/conduct between Teacher/Worker and Children

A code of behaviour for children/young people helps to explain their rights and responsibilities when taking part in a dancing school or organisation. For this to work, it is advised that children/young people need to be able to develop the code for themselves with the assistance of the teacher or other responsible adult. Codes of behaviour have been shown to help children/young people to develop their sense of fair play and mutual respect. When children/young people 'own' the code, they will protect it and support it.

All schools/organisations should establish a code of behaviour between workers and children, to avoid the possibility of misunderstanding, or the potential for allegations of misconduct. Such codes should include the following guidance:

- Workers should be sensitive to the risks involved in participating in contact sports or other activities
- While physical contact is a valid way of comforting, reassuring and showing concern for children, it should only take place when it is acceptable to all persons concerned.
- Workers should never physically punish or be in any way verbally abusive to a child, nor should they even tell jokes of a sexual nature in the presence of children.
- Workers should be sensitive to the possibility of developing favouritism, or becoming over involved or spending a great deal of time with anyone child.

- Children should be encouraged to report cases of bullying to either a designated person, or a worker of their choice. Complaints must be brought to the attention of management.
- Everyone involved in the organisation should respect the personal space, safety and privacy of individuals.

AIDT Guidelines of Good Practice

Child Protection is paramount for all activities relating to children, not only to provide the best possible protection for children in Dance but also to avoid allegations of poor practice and to ensure the safety of dance teachers and dancers.

All children have the right to be safe and be treated with dignity and respect. The promotion of good practice will reduce the possibility of abusive situations occurring. A good and caring teacher will continually reflect upon their own teaching style, philosophy and practices to ensure the safety and well-being of students at all times.

AIDT outline the following examples of good practice, which will create a safe and desirable environment and which can be included in class policies drawn up:

You Should:

- Behave in an exemplary manner and provide a role model for excellent behaviour.
- Treat all dancers with respect and dignity.
- Always place the safety and welfare of the dancers as the highest priority.
- Recognise the stage of psychological and physical development of the individual dancer and avoid excessive training or competition.
- Motivate through positive feedback and constructive criticism.
- Always be publicly open when working with children. Avoid situations where a teacher and an individual child or vulnerable adult cannot be observed.
- **If possible have at least one other responsible adult present during dance classes**
- Care should be taken when providing physical contact and support in dance. Avoid unexpected or surprising contact. Avoid inappropriate contact.

- Obtain written consent from parents to act in loco parentis and if the need arises, to administer emergency first aid, and/or other medical treatment.
- Maintain a written report of any incident or injury together with any subsequent treatment or action.
- Request written consent from parents when children and young people are required to be transported by the teacher/assistant teacher/or class assistant. Do not take a child alone on a car journey except in exceptional circumstances.

Practice never to be condoned:

Your should never:

- **Reduce a child to tears as a form of control.**
- **Allow children to use inappropriate language unchallenged.**
- **Do things of a personal nature for a child that they can do for themselves, unless you have been requested to do so by parents.**
- **Depart from the premises until you have supervised the safe dispersal of all children.**
- **Resort to bullying tactics or verbal abuse.**
- **Cause a dancer to lose self-esteem by embarrassing, humiliating or undermining the child.**
- **Spend excessive amounts of time alone with a child away from others.**

One accepts that on occasion there may be situations where the unexpected does occur. In these situations you should make a brief note of the event and ensure that the parent or guardian is informed of the incident.

