

Learning Culture & Codes of Practice

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Equality and Diversity Considerations:	Policy should be available in accessible format for all students.
Further information:	

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Learning Culture

At Northern School of Contemporary Dance we work to create an **inclusive environment** in which all students are able to develop as individual dance artists, supported by their peers and tutors.

We are a diverse group of people coming together from many different cultures. We have distinct life experiences and many different ideas about dance, education and life. We believe our differences should be celebrated and that they enrich the experience of training here. We recognise entering a new learning culture can be challenging. Therefore, we ask everyone to:

- work with **patience and generosity of spirit** to create a positive learning environment for all
- take the time to **get to know everyone** across all areas of the school, to better understand their point of view
- be **respectful and supportive** of peers, tutors, guests and staff across all areas of the school
- consider the importance of learning to work both as an **individual and in collaboration** as a member of a team
- recognise the value of approaching all your classes with **curiosity** and an open mind
- be aware of the need for **reflection** and **independent study** in taking responsibility for your own learning
- be prepared to take on **new ideas** or consider differently previously formed habits of behaviour and movement patterns
- commit to ways of working that enable you to **feel prepared** and able to engage with study. This may include working with the resources prepared to support and enhance your practice such as resource lists, as well as seeking support as needed.
- be aware that dealing with new ideas can feel **challenging**. This a natural part of learning.
- be aware that it is brave and sensible to **seek support** when you face challenges
- work mindfully in relation to **safe practice**, what is right for your body, and your preferences
- be aware of the need for **consistency** of approach to see progress
- seek to recognise your strengths and weaknesses and apply this knowledge in **setting targets** for improvement.

For more information on how the Learning Culture is applied inclusively within the school please refer to the Inclusivity Protocols.

Academic Freedom

Academic freedom and freedom of speech sit at the heart of the UK's higher education sector.¹

The European Higher Education Area and Bologna Process made up of 49 countries, agreed a statement on Academic Freedom which aims to outline a shared understanding of academic freedom:

https://ehea.info/Upload/BFUG_DE_UK_73_9_a_Statement_Academic_freedom.pdf

Academic freedom is an indispensable aspect of quality learning, teaching and research in higher education as well as of democracy. It is a necessary condition for higher education institutions to produce and transmit knowledge as a public good for the benefit of society. It guarantees academics and students the freedom of thought and inquiry to advance knowledge through research and to exchange openly, as well as the freedom to communicate the results of research within and outside of the framework of academic institutions and programmes.

The [Higher Education \(Freedom of Speech\) Act 2023](#) sets out the future direction for the legislation and the main duties of universities. The [Academic Freedom & Freedom of Speech Policy and Code of Practice](#) outlines how NSCD will uphold this duty.

Student groupings

In line with NSCD's values for **championing individuality and diversity**, this statement, **co-authored** by students and staff, outlines our approach to creating student groups for classes, assessments and rehearsal processes.

Whenever groups are created, members of staff consider a **range of factors** that support the process of creating groups that are balanced in terms of, **energy, ability, additional support needs, interpersonal factors and group dynamics**. Teaching staff create groups based on these factors before circulating proposed groups to the wider teaching staff team for input, and to the Head of Student Support, for additional insight.

Individual characteristics are not used to determine student groups, as the process is a robust and nuanced amalgamation of factors that aim to **promote balance**, as referred to above, and that try to **remove societal expectations** based on specific labels, whether in relation to age, disability, gender, gender reassignment, race, religion or belief, sex, and sexual orientation.

¹ <https://www.universitiesuk.ac.uk/latest/news/higher-education-sector-statement#>

Code of Practice

We want all students to gain maximum benefit from NSCD's professional dance training programmes. We seek to create an environment where all students, staff and guests feel confident and comfortable going about their daily activities in the building and wherever else they may engage with representatives of NSCD.

NSCD Codes of Practice underpin a **culture of inclusion and acceptance**, a culture we believe maximises learning for students and engenders a sense of purpose, achievement and belonging for all.

We ask all members of the NSCD community to carefully consider the following information and advice to help us all maintain a positive, healthy and professional working environment for everyone.

Behaviour

- Be **considerate and respect everyone** in the school. This includes respecting other's race, religion and beliefs; gender; sex, sexual orientation; disability; age; social background, political views, and role within the school. Harassment will not be tolerated.
- Be considerate of others when moving about the learning areas, studios, classrooms, offices, reception areas, car park and grounds. We should all take responsibility to ensure that everyone can **move freely** through the space.
- Take care to **act safely** and not put yourself and/or others at risk. Support others to act safely too. If staff consider a student to be acting unsafely including drug or alcohol use, we reserve the right to address and take appropriate action. This may include removing the student from group activities, class, rehearsal, or performance for their own safety and the safety of others.
- **Anti-social behaviour** including harassment, sexual misconduct, bullying, physical violence, aggression and/or drug or alcohol-related incidents may result in disciplinary action outlined in the Non-Academic Misconduct Policy: www.nscd.ac.uk/policies-and-procedures

Whole School Environment

- **Respect School property** and other people's belongings.
- Support the School's security by ensuring all **visitors and guests** follow the appropriate procedures.
- Seek permission in advance for visitors to observe any classes or rehearsals. All visitors are required to comply with NSCD policies and procedures.
- Remember that NSCD is used by **different groups** of people including HE course students, Learning & Participation learners and external hirers, including children, young people and vulnerable adults. Please be respectful and polite in all interactions.
- Bottled water can be used anywhere in the building. For **eating and drinking** other types of beverage, please use the foyer and café areas, and avoid studios and the library.
- In the interests of everyone's health, the school is a **non-smoking environment**, including vapes and e-cigarettes, apart from the designated area, just inside the side entrance gates on Louis Street. Please use the designated smoking area and ashtrays.

Smoking in all other areas is prohibited.

- Students using external facilities under their own arrangements may not be covered by the school's insurance policies and therefore the school cannot accept responsibility for any injury, loss or damage sustained off the School premises.
- Permission must be sought in advance to book **rehearsal space** at NSCD for external projects or on behalf of people external to the school.
- Help the cleaning and catering staff to make sure our environment is a pleasant one by **tidying away litter**. Take responsibility for returning things to their rightful place after using them.
- From an **accessibility** perspective, corridors and the areas surrounding doors should always be kept clear to ensure everyone can move freely through the space at all times. Outdoor shoes should be left in the **shoe-racks** provided outside the studios and bags, folders and coats should be kept in **lockers**, along with your valuables, whilst you are in class.
- The **floors in the studios** must be safe for you to dance barefoot and therefore outdoor shoes must not be worn in them as grit or glass may be left behind.
- Respect the **instruments** and musicians' working space in studios: keep the drums or pianos (even when covered) free from clutter and avoid blocking the accompanists' view in class.
- Should you be required to wear trainers in class, please ensure they do not mark the floor – light-soled trainers are often most appropriate.
- Please avoid the use of hair and body products that leave studio floors slippery.
- Please **avoid the use of aerosol** deodorants or other perfume sprays outside of changing facilities as they can aggravate asthma and other respiratory conditions.

Library

In the interests of ensuring a quiet and safe learning environment for all, we ask you to follow these simple guidelines when using the library and its resources:

- NSCD has policies which relate to the use of school computer systems and the internet. Please refer to the **IT Policies**.
- Where possible leave coats/bags elsewhere, as these can cause an obstruction when the library is busy.
- Please respect other people and switch off or turn to **silent mode**, mobile phones and devices before you enter the library area.
- Be **mindful of other** students and staff working in the library space.
- Treat all resources with care and be mindful that they are for use by all school students and staff.
- Resources borrowed on your student ID are your responsibility – be careful not to lose them or lend them to other people.

Use of the Bodywork Studio

Please remember that the Bodywork Studio is also a **shared working space**. It is used for many reasons; muscle toning, cardiovascular training, restorative work, stretching practice.

For all our comfort please have in mind the following:

- All equipment, including items such as stretch bands and other injury recovery aids are available to borrow but should be **returned after use** in other studios

- Lost or damaged items must be replaced
- Store equipment in the correct place
- Treat equipment with care
- Dispose of rubbish
- Respect students doing rehab work and give priority to those on alternative timetable
- For **assistance** using any of the equipment, including the Pilates Reformer, contact Student Services or the physio team

Clothing and appearance

Your clothing/jewellery/hairstyle all need to be appropriate for the activity and allow you to participate fully in the range of activities offered by NSCD tutors and to move in a **safe and efficient** way.

- Ensure you have enough **comfortable dance clothing** for your practical sessions, including:
 - tight and loose fitting tops and bottoms*
 - long and short leg coverage
 - long and short-sleeved tops
 - socks
 - a pair of ballet shoes
 - appropriate supportive underwear (dance supports or sports bra) as necessary

**please note loose fitting items should be appropriate and not create additional slip or trip risk*

- If you require clarification about what clothing is appropriate for a particular session/practice please speak to your tutor.
- We recognise that the use of **binding** can be problematic when undertaking intense exercise but also recognise that some students may choose to bind. Should you require support and information around safe binding, packing or tucking practices, please contact the Head of Student Support.
- It is at your tutor's discretion to prevent you from participating in class if they do not feel you are dressed in a way that supports the **health and safety**, and comfort of all within the professional dance training setting, see also the school's [Safe Contact Principles](#).
- Students are not permitted to wear hooped, large, sharp or pointed **jewellery** in class as they run the risk of causing harm to themselves or other.
- Students wearing excessively long or sharp **nails** run the risk of causing harm to others, particularly in sessions which involve contact with peers – these should be removed in the interests of everyone's comfort and safety.
- Consider a **hairstyle** which doesn't cover your eyes or face or inhibit your participation in any element of all classes.
- In consideration of all students and staff, it is essential that high standards of **personal hygiene** are maintained.

Preparation for practical sessions

- Practical sessions vary and, with guidance from staff, you will need to work out what helps you most as an individual to **prepare** for each of your activities. Warming up for the first class of the day is different to preparing for a session after lunch, and it is vital you take responsibility for preparing your body and mind thoroughly for every session you participate in to avoid injury and gain maximum benefit.

- Timetabled **independent warm-ups** are scheduled before the first practical class of the day to offer space and time for appropriate preparation.
- The most effective warm-ups begin at least 15 minutes before the first class. A warm-up should include activities which;
 - raise the body temperature
 - mobilise joints
 - activate muscle groups
 - include relevant body conditioning
 - include practice of specific and challenging co-ordinations from class material
 - include gentle stretching
 - mental preparation
- Warming up for classes later in the day may include similar activities but for a shorter duration and perhaps at a lesser intensity. It is important to note that in choreographic workshops or rehearsal sessions it is not usual for the choreographer or tutor to lead a warm-up. It is the dancers' responsibility to adequately prepare.
- **Latecomers** may not be permitted to join class in order to ensure their safety and that of others in the space. This decision is at the tutor's discretion and is not a punitive act but a measure to reduce injury and/or accidents.
- Phones may be used with headphones during warm-up and cool-down periods but you should not use the studio sound systems without checking with everyone present in the studio. It is important to **respect your colleagues** and not to distract them from their own warm-up or cool-down.
- Before the session begins it is important to inform the tutor of any **injury or health problems** and take responsibility for your own safe practice. Participation in the class, workshop or rehearsal is at the tutor's discretion. Please note that tutors may not have checked emails sent immediately before a class and therefore it is helpful, where possible, to speak directly to the tutor.
- Students are invited to always bring a **notebook and pen**, or recording device, to sessions to capture important information.

After classes, workshops and rehearsals

- Time should always be taken to **warm-down** after classes, workshops and rehearsals as appropriate, to avoid injury and return the body's systems to pre-physical activity levels. A warm-down might including:
 - Stretching (passive or active)
 - Reducing the heart rate
 - Proprioception activities
 - Meditation / breathing activities
 - Reflection
- Directed study and **independent learning** are an important part of learning. We encourage you to supplement your classes by practicing material not fully achieved immediately after, or at a later time following a period of reflection. We expect you to engage with research tasks set by tutors and to follow your own areas of interest. If you require support with this, you can speak with tutors, Student Support and/or Heads of Faculty.