Institute of the Arts Barcelona

IAB Physical Contact Policy

Policy

Institute of the Arts Barcelona

IAB Physical Contact Policy

Policy Details

Responsibility for the Policy	Principal
Relevant to	All Students and Staff
Approved by	Senior Leadership Team
Date Introduced	August 2014,
Date Reviewed	July 2018, September 2021, September 2024
Next Review Date	September 2027
Related Policies and Documents	IAB Health and Safety Policy IAB Nudity Policy

Context

The IAB is committed to providing personalized and professional teaching. At times, it may be appropriate for an instructor to physically guide a student to clarify a point of instruction or to demonstrate an area of improvement in their technique.

Instructional Touch, as a means of correction and direction, is a successful method of teaching in various practical disciplines, often yielding more efficient results than other teaching methods.

Teaching faculty will approach any physical contact with sensitivity, professionalism, clarity and with appropriate contact and physical pressure.

The IAB acknowledges the potential complexities surrounding physical contact in teaching and fully recognises its responsibility to safeguard students and teaching faculty, ensuring the protection of individual welfare.

The Principles of Physical Contact

The IAB recognises that appropriate physical contact between students and teaching faculty is essential for effective training and continued development of technique.

Teaching faculty may physically touch a student to demonstrate a concept or adjust a student's body positioning.

I physical disciplines such as dance, movement, acting, and singing, physical alignment often requires such adjustments. For example:

- In singing classes, teaching faculty may place a hand on the back of a student's neck to help the student identify excess muscular tension that may be impeding their vocal function
- In pas de deux classes, teaching faculty may work directly with students to demonstrate safe lifting and support techniques

In all programmes, students should expect teaching faculty to demonstrate positions and movements by moving parts of their own and/or the students' bodies, and/or by moving students in relation to each other.

The IAB's Obligations of Physical Contact

- Teaching faculty will endeavor to seek the student's consent before making any physical contact between themselves and a student, and when guiding student to student physical contact.
- Contact by the teaching faculty is made with awareness of the needs of each individual to assist the student in correcting placement/position.
- Teaching faculty will endeavor to be clear, unambiguous, and specific about the nature and purpose of the touch when seeking the student's consent for physical contact.
- Teaching faculty will treat any physical contact with sensitivity and care.
- Contact will be unambiguous and eye contact and non-verbal cues will be assessed to monitor how the student is responding to the contact.
- Contact will not involve force (the physical pressure should never be firm enough to leave a mark) or the use of any instrument.
- Teaching faculty will be mindful of location and avoid situations where they are isolated with a student.
- A student has the right to immediately stop a particular contact if it makes them feel uncomfortable in any way without fear of consequence.
- Teaching faculty will be prepared to offer alternative instruction should the student decline instructional touch.
- Teaching faculty and students should feel free to report any concerns to the Principal.

When rehearsing Scenes of an Intimate Nature

The Performer/s and Director, or lecturer, will:

- Discuss and agree to times when intimate content will be scheduled for rehearsal/ performance, allowing sufficient time for an unhurried process.
- Ensure there is always a third party present (as well as the performer and director / lecturer) to keep the work in the professional realm and to ensure all blocking / choreography is clearly documented.
- Not require Performer/s to be in any state of undress for auditions or rehearsals, except in the case of technical and dress rehearsals for stage
- Ensure a closed room/set will apply; outside observation by external parties will be prohibited.
- Discuss the context and nature of the intimacy required for the scene with the students before any physical staging takes place.
- Never stand in for another student to demonstrate intimacy within the scene.
- Ensure Boundaries are established around areas of concern, including an agreed strategy to halt action where necessary (e.g. “button”)
- Use language and terminology that is as de-sexualised, anatomical and unambiguous as possible.
- A “plan B” should be established and rehearsed in case the planned intimacy cannot be carried out in performance
- A “placeholder” should be established (such as a palm to palm in place of a kiss) until sufficient time and care has been taken to choreograph / block the intimacy for the scene and should not be left to improvisation by the performers.

When rehearsing or performing Intimate Scenes, consideration might also be given to ensuring:

- Provision of a masked area for quick changes (stage) and or robes backstage with the logistics of the change agreed with the performer.
- Any state of undress is only from stage entrance to exit, at other times Performer/s are appropriately covered.
- Performers agree to areas of physical touch and agree on the blocking of the scene to ensure consent is given at each step.
- A Performer does not independently override agreed choreography — a new proposal should be discussed with the other Performer/s and director / lecturer and agreed upon before incorporation.

- Scenes of an intimate nature are not filmed, photographed, or recorded without the prior consent of the performers.

Ongoing Safety and Duty of Care

When creating performances that involve intimacy, stages of undress, sexual or violent content, the IAB recognises its responsibility to duty of care for all participants in the process and will provide general support, information, and further resources on request. For information regarding the Institute's stance on Nudity, please refer to the *IAB Nudity Policy.*

> *Please note: Instructional touch differs from physical contact in emergency situations, where the goal is to prevent accidents or minimize injury. In such cases, all participants should use their best judgment and respond quickly and appropriately.