

Touch Policy



Policy Statement

Bird College recognises that touch is essential in order to provide a finely tuned and high-quality learning experience for the students under our care. Used in a pedagogical context, and with empathy, touch supports proprioceptive development and enhances the development of technical skills.

This policy sets out to clarify the reasons and conditions for touch and it also aims to provide clear guidelines for staff teaching in each sector of the college (short courses, Pre-Professional Foundation course, and FE/HE programmes).

Guidelines

Staff needs to be clear and open about why they are using touch as a pedagogical methodology and be able to explain its purpose within their practice. There must be clarity and transparency in issues surrounding the need for touch and whenever possible, a description and rationale for physical contact should be communicated to the student.

The use of touch should be regularly discussed between members of staff.

Age, gender, and cultural factors should be carefully considered by staff as they might dictate the type and purpose of touch. Whenever possible, the student involved should consent to being touched, and staff should be sensitive to any verbal or non-verbal communication from the student's part which might indicate that they do not want to be touched. Staff should be sensitive to any changes of behaviour that might indicate the need to withdraw or reduce touch.

The College endeavours to provide a learning environment where both students and staff feel comfortable and protected. Students are able to express their wish not to be touched and should feel at all times they can approach a member staff to discuss any issues relating to touch and being touched.

If staff are in any doubt about issues concerning the appropriateness of touch or observe any practice that causes concern, they should discuss this with the Designated Safeguarding Lead.

Aims

- Facilitate and heighten the learning experience
- Raise awareness of the physical requirements of a specific movement or technique
- Assist the student in the journey of self-inquiry
- Aid the student to reach the required understating of technical proficiency
- Help the students to achieve their best physical and technical potential

Types of touch

- Facilitative tactile feedback: this type of touch reinforces the student's ability to connect and relate to movement kinaesthetically
- Manipulative tactile feedback: this type of feedback is used when the teacher aims to correct physical awareness or movement execution

- Guidance tactile feedback: This is type of feedback when the teacher aims to guide the student through a specific action

Implementation

- Tutors will, when appropriate, seek the student’s approval before any form of physical contact
- The policy will be in student and staff handbooks and reviewed regularly
- Touch will be used in a positive manner and will aid teaching / learning strategies and will also be part of specific feedback methodologies
- If through touch a member of staff has a concern about a student, they will inform the Assistant Principal (Student Wellbeing), who will take the necessary actions, or inform the necessary agencies
- If students feel that they would like to inform a member of staff that they would prefer not to be touched, they can inform the tutor through the following methods: by conversation at the end of the class or email, as part of a dialogue about the student’s progress, or alternatively, the student can inform another member of the teaching staff

Complimentary Policies

- Safeguarding Policy
- Bullying and Harassment Policy
- Health and Safety Policy
- Equality and Diversity Policy

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