

Intimacy and Consent Policy

Introduction

The way intimacy is integrated into school activities, such as classwork, pre-production, rehearsals, and performances, can be influenced by various factors. In the spirit of collaboration, it is essential that all Tring Park School staff and learners work together harmoniously, approaching every class, choreography, and scene with careful consideration. The emphasis should be on recognising and prioritising the well-being of every individual involved. Respecting personal boundaries and fostering open communication and consent are fundamental principles that must be upheld by all throughout the entire process.

Definitions

Intimate/Intimacy scenes; include simulated sexual action, nudity, partial nudity, kissing, bodily function scenes, simulated sexual assault or harassment, physical touch, familial intimacy, medical examinations, childbirth and more.

Intimacy Practitioner; a trained creative practitioner who works on intimate content for stage and/or screen. Some intimacy practitioners use 'Intimacy Coordinator' for working on recorded media and 'intimacy director' for live performance. Other might use an 'Intimacy Coordinator' for all content.

Power Dynamic; Power is a dynamic which is present in every relationship. Some dynamics are healthy, contributing to collaboration, development and empowerment. Other, however, can be toxic, leading to resentment, imbalance and harm/violence.

Sexual Harassment; 'In England and Wales, the legal definition of sexual harassment is when someone carries out unwanted sexual behaviour towards another person that makes them feel upset, scared, offended or humiliated' (Rape Crisis England & Wales)

Consent

The Sexual Offences Act for England and Wales 2003 states that a person consents to something if that person *'agrees by choice and has the freedom and capacity to make that choice'*. This definition must be adhered to in all physical and performative work at TRING PARK SCHOOL.

In live performance no-one but the performer can consent to an action proposed. The teacher/director/choreographer can propose a performer to be intimate with another performer but both performers must consent to the creative proposition. It is essential to keep in mind the very real power relationships that exist between adults and students at the school. See Power Dynamic in the Definitions above.

Note that consent previously given by a performer can be retracted by the performer at any point.

Aims

At Tring Park School for the performing arts, our aims are to look at the following areas when considering work of an intimate nature:

- Protect the emotional and psychological well-being of all learners and staff at Tring Park School for the Performing Arts.
- Ensure that any work of an intimate nature is considered to be appropriate in relation to the age and development of the students concerned.
- Ensure discussions about consent, intimacy, gender, sexuality, and emotional themes in stage performance and handled sensitively and appropriately.
- Reinforce principles of consent and best practices for managing and working on intimate content.
- Equip learners in various roles with the knowledge and confidence to handle intimate scenes professionally.
- Build effective relationships with Intimacy Directors or Coordinators to manage intimate content professionally.
- Offer professional language and tools for effective communication about intimate material, including inclusive language.
- Create a clear reporting structure for learners and staff to address concerns and maintain transparency.
- Develop protocols to prevent harassment, misconduct, or abuse of both intentional and unintentional when working with intimacy.

Staff working with touch and intimate content

Staff should reflect on the use of touch in their teaching. There should not be staff-student touch without an established framework for how it will happen and the reasons why it is part of the learning process. There must be a clear process for ongoing consent between staff and students. Staff should refer to the **Acceptable Contact** policy for details

Intimacy Education as part of the Students' Curriculum

Intimacy practice should be imbedded into the students' curriculum as part of their comprehensive training and preparation for a career in the creative industries. This is true of performers, stage managers, directors, movement directors, technical roles, and anyone who may have to work with or alongside Intimacy Practitioners on stage and screen.

To this end, this policy will be made explicit to all students in the school.

CRISP

Intimacy practitioners use the acronym CRISP;

- **C**onsidered
- **R**eversible
- **I**nformed
- **S**pecific
- **P**articipatory

These five elements must be present when staging intimacy or navigating touch for it to be true consent.

Considered: ‘We can never fully erase the power dynamics, systemic racism, and other effects of oppression that make freely given consent difficult, but we can consider all of the performers and information when ultimately making a decision about whether to give or withhold consent. This requires time and space for performers (or students) to get the information they need to consider all of the potential repercussions associated with their decision’ (Intimacy Directors & Coordinators inc. (IDC))

Reversible: ‘Anyone can change their mind about what they feel like doing, anytime’ (Planned Parenthood). A performer may agree to try some intimate choreography but change their mind, they may do it in one rehearsal but not the next, or one production but not next term’s production.

Informed: Communicating honestly about what is going to happen and when. This includes letting performers know ahead of time when they will be rehearsing intimate moments.

Specific: Saying yes to one thing doesn’t mean someone has said yes to other intimacy moments. There should be no vagueness over physically intimate choreography, e.g. ‘on that line, touch him’ is not specific enough for someone to consent to action.

Participatory: ‘People need to be involved in the decision-making process around what happens with and to their body! It means that decisions are not just handed down to performers about what will happen in a scene, but that they are invited into the conversation as full and equal participants in the creative decision-making process.’ (IDC)

Protocols for Intimate Scenes in Teaching, Rehearsal and Performances

The intrinsic nature of teaching and training in performing arts necessitates addressing issues of physical intimacy as part of rehearsal and performance. In this context the safety and wellbeing of all students is paramount. It is therefore vital that students feel assured that their bodily autonomy, physical safety, right of consent and mental wellbeing are protected in relation to all physical work. This document aims to help provide that assurance by setting out Tring Park School’s protocols for physical intimacy in performance and associated rehearsals.

This protocol incorporates the **Acceptable Contact** policy and should be read alongside the school’s **safeguarding and pastoral policies, Staff Code of Conduct** and students should be reminded of how they can raise concerns through the various safeguarding and pastoral channels in the school. As a suite of policies, they are augmented by the clear guidance provided by staff during classes, and open discussions with students. Students must be given the opportunity to state their personal boundaries in advance of all physical and intimacy work.

Any theatrical intimacy must be kept to an absolute minimum and be essential for the storytelling and at all times be age appropriate. Alternative staging is advised wherever possible.

When Should You Seek Additional Support?

At Tring Park School, directors and choreographers must complete the Production Intimacy Content Form when preparing for a production. This form outlines the specific intimacy needs of the project and helps determine whether an Intimacy Liaison or Intimacy Director is necessary. While it serves as a preliminary guideline, it is crucial to critically assess the unique content of each production, as some situations may extend beyond standard recommendations.

Intimacy Needs for Tring Park School Productions - For Choreographers, Directors and HOD

As you prepare for your production, it is important to understand the intimacy requirements for your show.

We kindly ask you to take the time to complete the Production Intimacy Content Form with the information you currently have. Your responses help you establish whether your production should engage an Intimacy Liaison or Intimacy Director or if you need any additional support.

[to complete the Production intimacy content form please click here](#)

Intimacy Liaison Role

This role will normally be undertaken by a member of the Pastoral team with their consent. In they are unable to do so, another member of the stage any other vocational department may be asked to undertake the role. Responsibilities of this role include:

- manage intimacy calls before a show
- be present in intimacy sessions as a third party
- take notes and maintain the consented choreography throughout the run of the show
- keep a log to write any changes in choreography so they can notify the performers of deviation from the consented choreography
- maintain recorded copy of the agreed choreography.

Intimacy Director Role

Where a scene or role in a production requires greater support, the school would look to employ an external Intimacy Director for further guidance.

In common with every student the Staff should know who to contact if they or someone else in the school has concerns, anxiety, feelings of stress or any mental health issues. There are established Tring Park School protocols for seeking mental health support and these should be reiterated to the students.

Good practice in the management of intimacy scenes can include:

- Ensuring the safety of performers while supporting the realisation of the creative vision and storytelling.
- Director and stage management team co-ordinating on scheduling of intimacy sessions during rehearsal time, length of time needed etc.
- Not permitting mobile phones anywhere in the auditorium including backstage during technical rehearsals of intimate scenes
- Assigning an 'Intimacy Liaison' for the run – At Tring Park school this is likely to be a member of the pastoral team.
- Regular discussion with the Intimacy Liaison with regard to the wellbeing of the performers and if any further support is needed during the run.
- Ensuring performers are clear on the context of intimate scenes
- Language of notes, guidance and direction for intimacy scenes should be kept as neutral as possible (e.g. not overtly sexual) while conveying the necessary direction
- No company member, including staff and external creative team, should use any innuendo or suggestive language regarding intimate scenes and acts of intimacy, and must all conduct themselves professionally.
- Use the characters' (*not* the performers') names to refer to actions, language etc in discussion of scenes
- Use of a key word for performers to temporarily halt proceedings should they feel the need to do so
- Use of a 'placeholder' movement during rehearsal such as palm-to-palm in place of e.g. kissing if the Intimacy Liaison is not present or performers wish to defer the moment of intimacy
- Notating choreography of intimate scenes, in writing and/or AV for reference throughout the rehearsals and run.
- Full choreographing of all intimacy regardless of how simple or fleeting it is
- Performers must never improvise or deviate from choreographed intimacy
- Change of choreography if the consent of the performers changes during the run, or due to any injury or sickness
- Careful documentation of intimacy rehearsals – this can simply be a useful aid to the process as well as for reference in any conflict resolution

Wardrobe and Fitting

Costumes must adhere to the spirit of this policy and at all times must be age appropriate and protect the modesty of the performer. Where performers choose their own costume, the school reserves the right to overrule the performers costume choice if it is deemed immodest or age inappropriate.

- Wardrobe staff and performers are encouraged to communicate clearly with each other throughout fittings to ensure that performers are fully informed about necessary touch and can express any concerns/questions
- Wardrobe fitting procedures must respect the performers' comfort and personal boundaries
- Performers should always wear appropriate undergarments to fittings

- Space constraints may dictate that fittings are sometimes held with other personnel present; performers should state in advance if they have specific concerns about privacy or if they prefer more or fewer people in the room

Nudity and sexual content

Full nudity is not permitted at the school under any circumstances. Partial nudity is not permitted in any student performance up to Y11. From Y12, performers, as with all aspects of intimacy in performance as listed above, student consent must be obtained for any partial nudity (at no time would it be appropriate for a student to be in anything less than 'swimwear' coverage). There should be no partial nudity during rehearsals as this would only occur when in costume during tech/dress rehearsals.

Under no circumstances will students be asked or required to engage in simulated sexual acts with a scene partner.

Technical rehearsal, dress rehearsal and show

- There must be intimacy calls before each performance, allowing for time to discuss any issues and raise concerns.
- Alterations of intimate choreography must be made in consultation with the Intimacy co-ordinator and the director/teacher/choreographer only, never just the director/teacher/choreographer and strictly with the consent of the performers.
- There should be reduced personnel present when teaching/rehearsing intimacy: performers or personnel who are not required for such scenes should exit the rehearsal room/auditorium.
- Clear reminders of the use of mobile phones must be given.
- Clear signage posted outside the auditorium and in any programme materials to make audiences aware there is intimate content in the show.

Additional Information

- Minimum 24 hours' notice should be given to the performers for rehearsals of intimate scenes.
- There should be a sign outside the door to the performance space stating that an intimacy session is in process and a screen to be placed over any windows or other openings that might prevent complete privacy for the performers.
- The following reduced team will be present in the intimacy session: stage manager and/or intimacy co-ordinator, director/teacher/choreographer and performers
- Performers cannot practise a scene involving intimacy unless the Intimacy Liason is present
- A contingency plan must be in place in case choreography cannot be performed

- In marketing the show, before using promotional images containing intimacy the written consent of the performers involved must be obtained.
- There must be written assurance from the school that no photographs (regardless of whether they portray moments of intimacy) taken from either rehearsal or performances may be distributed online or otherwise without the performers' prior written consent.
- Any hygiene expectations must be clearly explained.

Credits:

Ian West

Equity Guideline

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