



### **Our Ethos:**

- Building our students as dancers, and ourselves as teachers, friends, confidants, and to be an inspiration
- Exhibiting and instilling passion for dancing
- Be inclusive to all backgrounds, body shapes, styles, abilities and ambitions
- Treating every teacher, student and parent with respect and as an individual

### **We will:**

- Ensure every teacher working at Colours of Dance is properly qualified with suitable experience
- Work together as teachers to maintain a high across-school standard
- Prepare every lesson and choreography to the school's high standards, and within the reach of every student in the class
- Ensure every student in a class develops individually and as part of the group, and enjoys every aspect of learning with Colours of Dance
- Work with the students to meet their ambition and learning style, even if that means putting them in touch with another teacher or school
- Review each student and provide our expert, qualified recommendation for progression to the student or their parents
- Be open: to feedback (given and received respectfully), open to new ideas (spontaneous or stimulated), open to change (in ideas and practise), open to transformation (of thinking, of skill), open to growth (in mindset, in skill, in age, in wisdom), open to hard work.

### **We trust that you will:**

- Turn up on time, or call ahead to say you'll be late or absent, so that the teacher can plan for the class
- Wear uniform and hair as prescribed by the class, so that the teacher can correctly see body shapes and positions in order to speed ability and prevent injury
- Be courteous to the teachers and staff, and honour communicated payments and deadlines
- Talk to us about any commitment you're not able to meet ahead of time
- Let us know first if you feel we've let you down

At Colours of Dance, we teach with passion and commitment, in every class. Every teacher has spent a minimum of 10 years training - perhaps firstly as a dancer, and certainly as a teacher. Furthermore, they continue to seek learning and new skills and to continue with their training as teachers. We love dance - it has been the golden thread running through our lives - motivating, rewarding and driving us all.

Every person in our class benefits from that passion and commitment, no matter whether they come to dance classes for a few classes because their mum and dad think it's a good idea, whether they are as passionate about it as their teacher, or somewhere in between - it's a wide spectrum!

### **Passion.**

It's all-encompassing. And when you hear someone speak on a subject with passion, they are compelling. Colours of Dance teachers aim to do this every week, so that every student in the class, no matter their agenda, will be engaged and gain something - because if nothing else their teacher will interest them in their shared activity.

This passion leads to commitment. Dance is easy to access and hard to master. For Colours of Dance teachers, this commitment manifests as 1-3 hours of preparation & reflection for every hour of class taught. When conducting teacher training, this is 5-8 hours of preparation and follow up for every hour spent teaching. Cumulatively, this is a lot of hours, a lot of passion & a lot of commitment that will be focused into each student!

The passion and commitment are unstinting and wholehearted. In each class, no matter the age group, there will be multiple learning styles, multiple learning needs, multiple interest levels, multiple goals, multiple skill levels. And often, quite a lot of literal and metaphorical baggage entering the studio on the shoulders of each student. Colours of Dance teachers know this, they accept this, they find it endlessly fascinating and they are committed to each and every student finding their dance path.

All of these things create a 'safe space', that is both figurative and literal.

### **A Safe Space**

In this world where the agenda is increasingly focused on protection, isolation & separation, all potentially leading to misunderstanding, suspicion and conflict, at Colours of Dance, we are holding firm to a different set of ethics. Dance is about communicating, sharing, is dependent upon collaboration and working to keep minds open. Open to feedback



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### **Ethics in practice**

We are committed to working collaboratively with professional colleagues for the best outcome for our students. This is somewhat unusual among dance schools, where traditionally schools have competed for students in an area and there has been some mutual suspicion. We think this is wrong, and so we work openly with other schools in cases where a child would benefit from that, we work with students from other schools only with their teachers' permission and we work as a team of teachers across all the grades to offer choice and insights at all levels. We observe each other's classes, we handover students from one level to another carefully and we review progress across the school openly and as a team. When we have very talented students, we work with them to find vocational training and other experiences to benefit their development - our role is at the grassroots and eventually we know we will say goodbye to all our young students (unless they stay to train as teachers!), passing them onto the next stage in their lives in the best shape possible.

Dance teachers, whose main skill is the ability to look, assess and understand, will see a lot in a student - and not just about how to do a particular step better. We are often able to help parents identify and then support learning needs in children, spot when someone is struggling with something emotionally outside the studio or draw out a skill or quality that until then had remained hidden. We are able to work imaginatively and supportively with a myriad of conditions.

### **When things go Wrong**

It doesn't always work well- it is natural and to be expected that Colours of Dance, for all our commitment, openness and energy, will not satisfy every learner or connect as the right place for every student or their family. We accept this - we will always try to find the right teacher, class and level for anyone who applies for a place in our classes, but we may not succeed. In these cases, we are always very happy to help that person find an alternative school or teacher who might suit their needs or personality better.

### **So what does this mean for our students?**

First, you are students (or families of students) and not customers. It is an important and often missed distinction that defines how we think of you and how we aim to develop relationships that are long-term and mutually supportive.

Second, we aim to treat and be treated as individuals, with general shared needs or goals, but also with unique quirks. In every class, we aim to give feedback to every student in the room individually (evidenced by saying out loud every name, every lesson) as well as to give general or class feedback.

Third, we aim to know our students well - certainly as dancers, but for those who are members of the school for some years, this knowledge will increase. This is why we limit the number of places in class to 16. At Colours of Dance, we believe that this gives us the time we need with each of our pupils and we sacrifice income from additional fees (some schools have up to 25 students in a class) in order to give this time.

Fourth, when we get it wrong (as sometimes we do misunderstand someone or miss a clue), we will acknowledge that openly and want to get together with you to correct whatever went wrong.

Fifth, Every person at Colours of Dance believes Black Lives Matter. We are committed to having a culture in our school that is safe and does not support, enable or turn a blind eye to discrimination of any kind. Decisions in any aspect of the school, whether they are about recruitment, costumes, uniform, exam or show participation or anything else, will be made after an open & transparent process has taken place and we will, at all times, seek to listen to individual feelings and need, learning and adapting as we do.

We would be glad to hear from any person at any time who wishes to share their thoughts or experience about this issue.

### **We hope**

We hope that you will intuit everything described - whether you are able to articulate it or not. We hope that reading this will increase your understanding and awareness of what else happens at Colours of Dance. We hope that whilst you may not be 'into' dance and maybe you're just bringing a family member along because they like it, your family member will be a recipient of all this commitment and passion. We hope that if you have danced with us for a few years, you will recognise or have felt some or all of this passion & commitment. And have seen this passion and



commitment in action regularly. As dance teachers, going the extra mile is normal, though we hope you won't take it for granted.

We hope that feeling all of this, teacher and student alike will arrive at class on time, with the correct kit. The student will respect the teacher's training, passion and commitment, and will say thank you from time to time whilst still feeling able to challenge or disagree respectfully. The teacher will respect the student's learning journey and understand that it won't be smooth and that it takes courage sometimes to walk through a studio door, no matter what your age or ability. That your teacher will challenge you and demand effort, that they will see what you are capable of and will stand side by side with you to help you achieve your potential. That they will celebrate your successes with you. In short, that we will all contribute to this school as it contributes to each of us.

We hope that in understanding all of this, that students feel they get value for money, and that possibly they get more than they realised. Whether you are dancing for fun or training at the start of a career, you will be trained and treated well and you should feel this.

We hope you will tell us when you are happy - generally we tend not to hear very much about content students as it's a state of 'normal'. It's really nice when we do, as often those who are not happy express themselves very forcefully and without remembering our starting point.

We hope that if you don't feel treated well, you will ask a question or tell us how you feel, secure in the knowledge that we are really interested and well intentioned. We will listen, learn and respond with respect, passion and commitment.