

Rodolfus Choral Foundation

The Rodolfus Choral Foundation Limited

PHYSICAL CONTACT POLICY

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Aims

This policy seeks to clarify what is expected of adults associated with the Foundation with regards to any form of Physical Contact on Foundation events.

Those to whom this document applies fall into the following categories:

Adults: For the purposes of this policy the term and references to 'Adult' means the following: to all people 18 and over who work for or provide education or management on behalf of the Foundation (whether paid or un-paid), including as staff, volunteers, observers and guests.

Students: any person receiving education from the Foundation, in a school setting, on a residential choral course, or as a member of the Rodolfus Choir.

Young Person/Child: any person under the age of 18 who is receiving education from the Foundation, in a school setting, on a residential choral course, or as a member of the Rodolfus Choir.

1. Precautions for Safe Practice

1.1 Adults must never touch a student in a way that could be considered indecent or aggressive.

- Adults should avoid all unnecessary or excessive touching of students including gestures of friendship such touching an arm, leg or back in a friendly way.

1.2 Although physical contact is generally discouraged, there may be occasions when it is appropriate to provide assistance.

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Examples of where touching a pupil might be proper or necessary:

- Using reasonable force for safety (using no more force than is needed);
- When comforting a distressed pupil;
- To give first aid.

1.3 Where young people are engaged in close one-to-one teaching, particularly in specialist vocal coaching or other music or sports sessions, the following precautions should be observed, that:

- Wherever possible, teaching methods should use non-physical teaching strategies such as mirroring, demonstrating and verbal cuing.
- Where necessary, physical touch is minimal, instructive and confined to necessity in order to avoid harm. e.g. demonstrating good practice in Alexander Technique or vocal coaching when verbal or mirroring methods are not effective.
- Permission is sought from the student every time a teacher wishes to demonstrate a point using touch.
- Physical contact should never take place in isolated areas. If necessary it must occur openly in the presence of others.
- Another staff member is in reasonably close proximity within the building;
- Sessions take place within normal timetabled hours;
- Where possible blinds and curtains are open;
- For singing lessons, hands-on manipulation of the diaphragm, throat or chest is strongly discouraged.

1.4 Adults must never use physical punishments.

1.5 Avoid the use of shared toilet/changing facilities at the same time as students, and never shower or change with students. Use designated staff facilities where available.

1.6 There is no reason to be alone in a room or car where there is no means of immediate exit. Doors should not be locked. If the door to a room in which an adult and student might be alone has no window, it is preferable that the door be left open.

1.7 When teaching a young person through on-line technology, students should remain in an open or public part of the house wherever possible, and parents should be aware that the lesson is taking place.

2. Proactive Response

2.1 Adults must always be prepared to explain actions and accept that all physical contact with students, whether one-off or regular (for example as part of training or coaching in a particular skill) may be open to scrutiny.

2.2 It is important to be sensitive to any discomfort expressed verbally or non-verbally by the student. Contact should only be with the student's agreement, the reason for and form of the contact should be clear to the student, the context should be an open and relevant one, and contact should last for the minimum time necessary. Consider alternatives to achieve the same ends without physical contact.

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2.3 It is best practice to inform a senior member of staff on duty of the details should the situation arise whereby it is necessary for an adult to be in a room alone with a student.

2.4 Only in extreme circumstances (e.g a student needing urgent medical treatment) should an adult and a student travel alone; this should be sanctioned by one of the course/event Directors before leaving. In non-emergency situations, parental permission should be sought before leaving. It is best practice to have two adults in the car if there is just one student, or at least two students if just one adult is available.

2.5 It is recommended that all adults self-refer to the Course DSL, Foundation DSL, or DDSL, should they feel they have put themselves into a situation that could be misinterpreted.