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RESPECT IN MOTION

The Safeguarding Bulletin for Dance



INTRODUCTION

Welcome to RESPECT IN MOTION, a quarterly publication dedicated to promoting safeguarding, equality, inclusion and wellbeing in the dance community.

Our aim is to raise awareness, share knowledge and foster a culture of respect where everyone feels safe, valued and included.

In this first edition, we focus on discrimination and equality in dance, exploring key issues, real-world examples and ways to promote equal opportunities.

Together, we can create a safer, more inclusive dance community where everyone can thrive.

IDO SAFEGUARDING TEAM

UNDERSTANDING DISCRIMINATION

Discrimination is defined as any distinction, exclusion, limitation or preference on the basis of race, color, sex, language, religion, political or other opinion, origin national or social status, economic status or birth. (Article 1 of the UNESCO Convention Against Discrimination in Education)

Discrimination in dance can affect access to training, auditions, performance opportunities, leadership positions and equal treatment within dance organisations.

01 Recognise discrimination

TYPES OF DISCRIMINATION

Racial discrimination

A dancer denied a role, treated different or required to change their appearance because of their race or skin colour.

Gender discrimination

A male/female category is not automatically discriminatory. It should be evaluated why the distinction exists, what legitimate objective it serves, whether the resulting treatment is proportionate.

Disability discrimination

It does not mean inability to participate.

Religious discrimination

Treating different religions with respect and inclusivity in dance requires balancing artistic freedom with religious accommodation and cultural sensitivity.

Discrimination based on sexual orientation and gender identity

Treating and preventing LGBTQI+ discrimination in dance

Did you know?

The UNESCO Convention Against Discrimination in Education was adopted in Paris on 14 December 1960 and entered into force on 22 May 1962. UNESCO lists 110 States Parties to the Convention, reaffirming the international commitment to equal access to education.

(Source: UNESCO, 1960; ratification data accessed in 2026.)

Women remain underrepresented in dance leadership. According to the Dance Data Project®, women accounted for 30.7% of artistic directors among 215 leaders analysed at ballet and classically based companies worldwide and in the United States.

(Source: Dance Data Project®, 2026 Global Leadership Report.)

Gender inequality persists in ballet choreography. Men choreographed 72% of the works programmed by the 50 largest U.S. ballet companies during the 2019–2020 season, highlighting the gender imbalance in professional choreographic opportunities.

(Source: Dance Data Project®, 2020 Season Overview Report.)

LGBTQI+ visibility can help challenge discrimination. Tennis champion Martina Navratilova participated in the United Nations Free & Equal campaign, supporting LGBTQI+ equality alongside other prominent athletes and human rights advocates.

(Source: United Nations Free & Equal, 2013.)

Dance can promote disability inclusion and empowerment. Following a spinal cord injury, Chelsie Hill founded the Rollettes in 2012, establishing a wheelchair dance team that promotes representation, community and empowerment through movement.

(Source: The Rollettes, official website.)

Religious discrimination can restrict access to cultural events. In 2022, classical dancer Soumya Sukumaran reported that her scheduled performance at Kerala's Koodalmanikyam Temple festival was cancelled after her Christian faith became known. The incident sparked public debate about religious exclusion in the performing arts.

(Source: The New Indian Express, 2022.)

Racial discrimination remains a concern in classical ballet. In 2021, French ballet dancer Chloé Lopes Gomes received €16,000 in compensation following an out-of-court settlement with the Berlin State Ballet after reporting racial discrimination. She alleged that she had been denied a white veil and instructed to wear white makeup to conform to the traditional appearance expected of the ballet corps. The case renewed discussions about racism and inclusion in ballet.

(Source: BBC News, 23 April 2021, "Black ballet dancer Lopes Gomes wins Berlin racism case.")

02 Make respect a daily practice

WHAT CAN YOU DO?

01 PREVENTION

Build a Culture of Respect

- Treat everyone with dignity, fairness and respect.
- Challenge stereotypes, discrimination, harassment and harmful jokes.
- Respect personal boundaries and consent — both online and offline.
- Promote equality, inclusion and open conversations.

Respect is not passive. It is a choice we make every day.

02 SUPPORT

Listen, Believe, Stand Together

- Listen without judgement and take concerns seriously.
- Let the person affected know they are not alone and that the behaviour is not their fault.
- Ask what kind of help they need instead of making decisions for them.
- Offer to accompany them to a trusted person or support service.

Sometimes, the most powerful words are: "I'm here for you. How can I help?"

03 REPORTING

Speak Up, Take Action

- Report harassment, discrimination, threats or other harmful behaviour through appropriate reporting channels.
- Contact a trusted teacher, supervisor, safeguarding officer, HR representative or relevant support organisation.
- Share factual information and preserve relevant messages or evidence when it is safe to do so.
- Respect the privacy of everyone involved and avoid sharing identifying details publicly.

If someone is in immediate danger, contact local emergency services.



MY RESPECT IN MOTION PLEDGE

I commit to taking small but meaningful steps towards a safer, more respectful community.

- ☐ I will treat others with dignity and respect.
- ☐ I will challenge harmful behaviour when it is safe to do so.
- ☐ I will listen to and support people who speak up.
- ☐ I will learn how to recognise and report harmful behaviour.

LEARN MORE ABOUT SAFEGUARDING

https://www.ido-dance.com/infos/safeguard/
https://safeguarding.ido-academy.com/