



# Evolution

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## Student Health Policy

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### 1. Introduction

**1.1.** Evolution Foundation College is highly conscious of the importance of a student's wellbeing, both physically and mentally during their training and strives to ensure that each student is given guidance as to his or her personal health, particularly relevant to dance/performing arts training.

**1.2.** These procedures, advice and guidelines have been sourced from relevant specialist bodies in each area of training. Each student should remember that whilst Evolution Foundation College can advise and offer guidance, ultimate responsibility for their health lies with the individual. Evolution Foundation College is a member of 'One Dance UK' which undertakes research and offers practical guidance on issues which affect dancers, both in training and professionally.

**1.3.** For details and advice on COVID-19 please see our COVID-19 Policy and Method Risk Assessment.

### 2. GP Information

**2.1.** Prior to starting the course, students must have informed the Directors via the Evolution Audition Application Form stating that the student is fit to undertake a vigorous physical training course if accepted.

#### General Practitioner (GP)

**2.2.** Students attending Evolution are required to register with a general practitioner (Doctor) in the area they will be living. This should be organised once living arrangements have been confirmed.

#### How to find a GP

**2.3.** If you are going into private accommodation, the local library should have a list of doctors covering the area. You could also try the following website: [www.nhs.uk](http://www.nhs.uk) To search on this website, use the "Find and choose services" link. You will need your London post code to do this.

**2.4.** For medical advice call NHS Direct on 111. This is a service able to give telephone advice about diagnosis and treatment, and can often advise you about the urgency of seeking medical attention i.e. they let you know if you should go to A&E or wait to see your doctor.

**2.5.** Registering with a local GP is strongly advised and is not only essential to your general wellbeing but also to ensure you can be referred appropriately in the event of an injury



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## 3. Medication

**3.1.** Any student who requires medication e.g. asthma sufferers, must keep their medication with them or nearby. Students who may require a member of staff to administer their medication in an emergency must inform Evolution Foundation College of the procedure in writing and supply necessary spare medication which will be kept in the admin office.

## 4. Injuries

**4.1.** In the event of an injury the student should discuss any treatment with the Treatment Manager. If the injury cannot be treated on site then specialist referrals will be given to registered practitioners only.

**4.2.** Following external treatment, the student should inform Evolution Foundation College and the Treatment Manager. The Treatment Manager must obtain a report of treatment given to the student by the external practitioner. This report will be held in the student's treatment file.

**4.3.** The Treatment Manager can arrange appointments for the students for exercise rehabilitation classes, sports massage therapists, and osteopaths who all treat on site in Evolution Foundation College's Treatment Rooms.

## 5. FirstAid

**5.1.** In accordance with our Health & Safety policy Evolution Foundation College ensures that several staff hold valid first aid certificates and a suitably equipped first aid box is kept in the :

- • **Kitchen Location**

**5.2.** A full list of qualified first aid staff certificates are displayed outside the Musical Theatre studio

**5.3.** Evolution Foundation College makes training and development available to all staff to ensure they are fully informed of correct and current theory and procedures in relevant areas of health and safety, first aid and safe teaching practices.

**5.4.** The Evolution Physiotherapist is available for confidential advice on treatments, injury or any matter relating to their physical welfare as required.

## 6. Nutrition

**6.1.** Guest lectures take place to provide students with advice and guidance on Health and Nutrition. The Physiotherapist can also provide advice and information.



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**6.2.** The diet of an average person in Great Britain is often poor which is compounded with very little exercise over the age of eighteen. Whilst one may be able to survive quite happily to a certain extent for most of our lives, this is not the case with a dancer and especially so with a trainee dancer. Dancers make huge demands on their bodies physically and therefore what you eat is of prime importance.

**6.3.** Dancers must think of themselves as 'prime professional athletes' and as such monitor carefully what they eat and drink each day. Be aware of how much carbohydrate, protein, fats and pure water you take each day. Think carefully and plan your meals with special consideration to your intake of fats and sugar, which whilst essential, should be kept to a minimum. Fruit and vegetables should be taken in greater quantities. You should aim to eat at least five portions a day from the fruit and vegetable category. Plenty of water should be taken, and water in a non-glass bottle is allowed in class.

**6.4.** Learn to take responsibility for your body. You probably have heard the cliché 'you are what you eat' and that is especially true if you wish to succeed as you embark on strenuous physical training. You will benefit more by keeping to a healthy eating plan. You are less likely to be sick if you build up your immune system and it has been proven that you are less likely to suffer injury.

**6.5.** If you wish to discuss any issue connected with nutrition please see the Physiotherapist or College Principal where appropriate advice or referral on any action which may be necessary can be given.

## 7. Drugs and Alcohol

**7.1. Drugs** The word drug is used to mean different things. It can mean prescribed medication, legal drug, or illegal drug.

**7.2. Medicines** are often necessary to get well when you are sick, however you should tell your doctor before prescribing medication that you are in training, including dance, as strenuous physical exercise does not mix with certain medicines. There are many alternative complimentary remedies that are available which in certain circumstances may be a better option.

**7.3. Legal Drugs** are drugs that the law allows you to take such as alcohol and nicotine. This, of course does not mean that they are good for you. Both have no nutritional value whatsoever; for a professional performer they are pure poison.

**7.4. Illegal Drugs** are those that the law does not allow and in recent years there has been a dramatic increase in the use of these types of drugs in young people.



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**7.5.** Do not be misled, drugs can be addictive. Your body may become dependent upon them and the repercussions on your training and life in general, mentally, physically and financially could prove disastrous.

**7.6. Ecstasy kills.** It can make your jaw stiff and your heart rate beat dangerously fast. You will be constantly hot and will sweat a great deal, constantly needing water, especially so if you are dancing. Afterwards you will feel tired and probably unhappy too. There may be other dangers that we do not know yet. If the police catch you with an 'E' then you will be in serious trouble.

**7.7. *Any student found in possession or under the influence of any illegal drug is liable to immediate dismissal.***



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## Smoking

**7.8.** Nicotine will damage your lungs by the tar in the smoke. Breathing someone else's smoke is passive smoking and can make you ill if you inhale a great deal so avoid smoky atmospheres. Smoking causes lung cancer and heart disease. Smoking will make you short of breath that will restrict your progress, as correct breathing is an essential part of all aspects of your training. Evolution Foundation College is a no-smoking college.

## Alcohol

**7.9.** For many people drinking becomes a regular event. This familiarity doesn't mean alcohol is safe. It is a powerful drug with many side effects on the body and mind. Effects can be dangerous and harmful, especially if it is taken too often and in great quantity. Alcohol is our society's 'chosen' drug, which unfortunately makes us less able to see the harm it can do. With such a widespread and accepted drug, understanding is all the more important.

**7.10.** Alcohol is a chemical that can be extremely poisonous. It doesn't matter if you drink in the form of a weak beer or a strong whisky it's the total amount that you take that counts. Alcohol 'damps down' the brain, making you less thoughtful and more spontaneous in your behaviour. As the drinks flow you are more likely to do things you normally would be embarrassed to do. Your judgement will be impaired.

**7.11.** As such alcohol will undoubtedly affect your understanding, memory, abilities and ultimately your training. Apart from the obvious effects like suffering a 'hang over' during class there are also other considerations e.g. it can cause severe depression when you sober up. It may add extra pounds to your body weight as alcohol has many calories with no nutritional value.

**7.12.** No one is suggesting that you should abstain completely, but rather that you learn as a student to respect your body and drink (if you are over the legal age of eighteen) in moderation and certainly not on college days or before performances.

**7.13.** If you wish to discuss such issues please do not hesitate to talk in confidence to an appropriate member of staff, such as the Treatment Manager or the Pastoral Care Manager who will be able to give you information on professional bodies that specialise in help of this kind.

## 8. Injury prevention & Maintaining & Enhancing Performance Potential of a Dancer

**8.1.** Evolution Foundation College's policy focuses on injury prevention and as such has a dedicated Dance based Physiotherapist specialist, who can create bespoke



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dance specific exercise programmes to help maintain performance potential. These programmes focus on:

- Offsetting biomechanical overuse
- Balancing the effectiveness and efficiency of movement techniques
- Maintaining physical capacity

**8.2.**It is essential that you sufficiently warm up prior to class and cool down properly afterwards. When stretching it is important that the body is fully warmed up and at no time should students practice passive stretching techniques.

## 9. Protocol for Injuries

**9.1.**Whether an injury occurs onsite or outside college it is essential that it is reported to the Physiotherapist, before attempting any form of dance. Here are six rules you must abide by:

1. Stop the activity you are doing immediately.
2. **RICE** rule **R**est, **I**ce, **C**ompression, and **E**levation. Request an ice pack from the Office and apply it to the injured area as quickly as possible for approximately 10 minutes for a large area and 5 minutes for a small area.
3. Report the injury to the office or Treatment Manager and enter details in the accident book located in the admin office or on the main reception. This does not apply to old or long-standing injuries.
4. Consult with the Treatment Manager as to the type of treatment needed as soon as possible.
5. Report back to the Treatment Manager, as required, to monitor progress.
6. In the case of acute injuries. **Do not H.A.R.M. ....Heat, Alcohol, Run/Dance, Massage.**

**9.2.**Once cleared by a medical practitioner, the Physiotherapist will put in place a recovery plan, which sets out the appropriate measures to support you through the recovery process.

**9.3.**No student is allowed to sit out of any part of a class without prior agreement between Physiotherapist and Principal.

## 10.Continuity of Treatment

**10.1** In order for the treatment to have continuity and to ensure that the exercises given to you are dance specific, it is important that you seek help/advice from the Physiotherapist and not any other teacher or practitioner offsite unless otherwise authorised by the Physiotherapist.

## 11.Accident



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**11.1.** In the event of an accident on-site, you should report your accident to the first member of staff available (normally your class tutor). This will then be recorded in the accident book by the college Director. If there are no staff available, you should report the accident immediately to the college office.

**11.2.** If an injury does not warrant immediate medical diagnosis and/or treatment from a medical practitioner, i.e. from an A&E/Minor Injuries department, you must still seek advice from the First Aiders as soon as possible (all Evolution tutors are trained and qualified First Aiders).

## **12.Recovery from Injury**

**12.1.** Recovery from an injury is individual to each person and dependent on the type of injury sustained. Your appointed medical professional, along with the Physiotherapist will monitor your progress and make the decision of how to grade your exposure back in to dance.

**12.2.** In the event of being reintroduced into dance after a serious injury ie.post- surgery the Physiotherapist will create a weekly revised dance timetable, which will be sent to the Principal who will coordinate with all tutors.

## **13.Vocal Health**

**13.1.** Like any athlete your vocal muscles need safe and secure nurturing and any damage can lead to long-term problems. Therefore, you must ensure you take good care of your instrument to avoid any problems arising. Plenty of sleep, water and a balanced diet will assist in keeping in good vocal health.

**13.2.** If you are suffering from vocal health issues then you must go to see the Head of Musical Theatre (MT) immediately. The Evolution Head of Musical Theatre is a Trained Vocal Health First Aider. They will advise on any treatment/ appointments/care that you may need. Vocal health must always be at the forefront of all of your technical training. Incorrect technique, fatigue and illness may lead to any of the following:

- Acid Reflux
- Muscular Tension
- Dysphonia
- Soft Nodes
- Hard Nodes

**13.3**Evolution Foundation College can provide details of physiotherapists who specialise in vocal massages and ENT Doctors who deal with issues within the vocal mechanism. It is therefore hugely important that you see the Principal (MT) at the first sign of any issues.



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