*Supporting **Dancers** with **Body Image***

FAQ for Dance Teachers & Mentors

1. What should I do if I notice signs that a dancer may be struggling?

- *Stay calm and avoid judgment.*
- *Make a private note of what you have observed (e.g., "appears tired," "skipped break," "withdrew from group activity").*
- *Share your concerns with your school/organisation's safeguarding lead.*
- *If appropriate, speak with the dancer privately using neutral, supportive language (see below).*
- *Do not attempt to diagnose or give advice on food, weight, or health.*

2. What should I do if I need to talk to a dancer or their parent/caregiver?

- *Speak in a private, safe setting.*
- *Begin with care: "I wanted to check in because I care about your wellbeing."*
- *Share only observations, not opinions or assumptions.*
  - *Say: "I've noticed you seem more tired lately and sometimes miss breaks."*
  - *Avoid: "You look too thin" or "You must have an eating disorder."*
- *Listen to what they say without pressuring them for details.*
- *Reassure them: "You don't have to go through this alone. There are people who can help."*
- *Report your concern to your safeguarding lead straight after the conversation.*

3. What should I do to talk about body image safely in class?

- *Focus feedback on strength, skill, and artistry - not size or shape.*
- *Use neutral terms: "strong posture" instead of "slim lines."*
- *Avoid comparisons between dancers' bodies.*
- *Highlight the value of diverse body types in dance.*

4. What should I do if a parent/caregiver raises concerns about their child?

- *Listen carefully and acknowledge their concern.*
- *Share only what you have directly observed in class.*
- *Avoid offering opinions, speculation, or diagnoses.*
- *Encourage them to seek professional advice from a GP, therapist, or relevant service.*
- *Pass the concern on to your safeguarding lead.*

5. Where can I signpost dancers or parents for help?

- *Beat Eating Disorders Helpline: 0808 801 0677*
- *Young Minds (for youth mental health): 0808 802 5544*
- *GP or school/college safeguarding lead*

6 How can I look after myself when supporting dancers?

- *Acknowledge that supporting dancers with these issues can be emotionally draining.*
- *Debrief with your safeguarding lead or a trusted colleague if you feel affected.*
- *Keep clear professional boundaries - you are not expected to "fix" the problem.*
- *Make time for your own wellbeing (rest, breaks, movement you enjoy).*
- *If you feel overwhelmed, seek support from your organisation, GP, or a mental health professional.*

7 What should I do if I say the wrong thing or make a mistake?

- *Acknowledge it, correct yourself simply, and move forward.*
- *Remember that showing care matters more than perfect words.*
- *If unsure, seek advice from your safeguarding lead.*

Quick Flow: What To Do If You're Concerned