



COVID-19 Risk Assessment Addendum – Mental Health

It is assumed that this Risk Assessment is an addendum to the COVID-19 Risk Assessment and mitigations already in place.

Objective: To minimise the negative impact of COVID-19 on Mental Health

Different groups of people in the UK are experiencing the coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic and the lockdown very differently. One area of concern is the impact of the pandemic on mental health and how this is affecting some groups much more than others.

Those in the performing arts industries are likely to be at enhanced risk of developing Mental Health issues. This is due to the significant number of professional Artists who have found themselves to be without work and the nature of the industry being a 'release' or coping mechanism from everyday life. Evidence suggest that groups have not been equally impacted; young adults and LGBTQIA+ community – groups with worse mental health pre-pandemic – have been hit hardest.

In addition to presenting new or enhanced risk factors, the pandemic has diminished many of the coping mechanisms people typically use, such as attending their weekly dance and drama classes.

It is vital for educational establishment to create a mentally healthy community that support their staff & students.

Students – Children & Young People

Hazard	Risk	Control Measure
Lack of support for Mental Health	Development of mental health difficulty or experience a worsening of an existing mental health issue	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Create & encourage a positive learning environment that promote mental wellbeing • Review safeguarding policy to ensure mental health is included • Display Mental Health information resources from recognised organisations (esp. local resources) focusing on children & young people • Ensure resource material are in easy to understand formats for younger children • Check in with parents to ensure they are supported and have resources should they need them • Reduce stigma and discrimination around mental ill health within the school through activities/occasional focus day • Students will be provided with access to support throughout & after the Covid-19 pandemic • Ensure staff can provide Mental Health First Aid should students present signs of distress
Low morale/ stress/anxiety	Development of mental health difficulty or experience a worsening of an existing mental health issue	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Promote a positive culture of trust that encourage children & young people to talk to staff should they have any worries/needs • Find ways to celebrate success, like awards • Ensure staff praise students whenever possible • Encourage positive and inclusive language to be used • Ensure staff understand how to spot signs of stress/anxiety within young children & youth so early intervention & support can be provided (Course Suggestion – Youth Mental Health Awareness Course) • Early open conversation with parents should signs of mental ill health is spotted so a support system can be established, both for the individual student and their parent
Students feel bullied, harassed or excluded	Development of mental health difficulty or experience a worsening of an existing mental health issue	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Monitor students' behaviour. Young children in particular may not know how to deal with bullying and it requires adult/staff's help • Ensure Bullying & Harassment policy is being followed • Ensure support is available should any students are being bullied/harassed
Students feel unsupported in the School	Development of mental health difficulty or experience a worsening of an existing mental health issue	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Monitor students' behaviour. Young children in particular may have difficulties expressing their emotions and it requires adult/staff's encouragement to voice their needs • Make students are aware of support available within the organisation (e.g. teachers) and support outside of the business (e.g. GP Counselling) • Encourage a direct dialogue channel with students' parents should either staff or parents are worried about the students so early intervention can take place • Create positive changes to conversations around Mental Health • Conduct anonymous evaluation surveys

<p>Students feel unsure about changes happening in the school and how they may be affected (likely as a cause of changes to the business model or timetable)</p>	<p>Development of mental health difficulty or experience a worsening of an existing mental health issue</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ensure good communication with parents and students throughout period of change and as you return to the studio in a COVID world • Provide support to parents so they feel safe which will have a positive influence to how their child feel returning to studio • Provide visual guides to students, particularly younger one, so they know what to expect before they return to studio. For example, a video demonstrating the arrival protocol with social distanced drop off or a video tour of the new studio set up • Ensure parents and students have the opportunity to raise concerns/ views, e.g. a video call to student with anxiety before returning to studio to reassure them mitigations that have been added to create a COVID secure environment • Monitor absences/changes in behaviour • Take into consideration presenteeism and how you can identify it
<p>Lack of self esteem leading to disordered eating and self harm</p>	<p>Development of mental health difficulty or experience a worsening of an existing mental health issue</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Create & encourage a positive learning environment that promotes mental wellbeing • Promote the use of activities which focus on developing self-esteem and self-belief (often building on strengths and encouraging success) and encourage positive group feedback • Ensure staff understand how to spot signs of disordered eating and self-harm within young children & youth so early intervention & support can be provided (Course Suggestion – Youth Mental Health Awareness Course or Mental Health First Aider course)
<p>Lack of support for students with mental ill health</p>	<p>Experience a worsening of an existing mental health issue</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Create a procedure to keep individual safe should they experience an episode/crisis and to include this in your first aid policy • Open door policy for students with trained persons (school counsellor/Mental Health First Aider) so individual can approach and be listened to as and when needed • Ensure support information is readily available on notice board/school intranet • Encourage individual needed to seek appropriate professional health • Encourage a support system within the establishment • Encourage a direct communication channel between parents & school should either parties are worried about the students so early intervention can take place • Encourage regular check-ins with a mentor or buddy (e.g. Wednesday morning coffee) • Additional support for those returning to the studio after long absence (such as COVID-19) • Encourage self-care practice
<p>Lack of support for students with physical and/or learning disabilities</p>	<p>Development of mental health difficulty or experience a worsening of an existing mental health issue</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ensure sufficient physical support is available to the individuals • Encourage a support system within the establishment • Encourage a direct dialogue channel with students' parents should either parties are worried about the students so early intervention can take place • Encourage regular check-ins with a mentor or buddy (e.g. Wednesday morning coffee) • Additional support for those returning to the studio after long absence • Monitor any changes in behaviour/early signs of mental health issues so early intervention can be provided

Adults & Staff

Hazard	Risk	Control Measure
Lack of support for Mental Health	Development of mental health difficulty or experience a worsening of an existing mental health issue	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Senior Management will promote mental wellbeing, including support for those in SMT roles • Staff will be provided with access to support throughout & after the Covid-19 pandemic • Display mental health information and resources from recognised organisations in staff room (esp. local resources) • Reduce stigma and discrimination around mental ill health within the school • Open-door policy to encourage communication • Line managers to be trained as Mental Health First Aiders or at least be Mental Health aware. • Line managers will offer additional support to staff who are affected by Coronavirus or has a family member affected • Reference https://www.mind.org.uk/information-support/coronavirus-and-your-wellbeing/ and www.hseni.gov.uk/stress
Staff not properly qualified or experienced for their role	Development of mental health difficulty or experience a worsening of an existing mental health issue	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ensure staff are not under-qualified or overqualified for their teaching, academic or administrative role (particularly student dance teachers) • Provide additional training, e.g. managing young people, running a safe dance studio • Encourage non-judgemental dialogue so staff can seek support
Issues with physical working environment (temperature, light, ventilation etc.)	Development of mental health difficulty or experience a worsening of an existing mental health issue	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Make physical adjustments where necessary - enable staff to adjust lighting, temperature, ventilation within studio and admin spaces • Ensure hazards are controlled • Encourage rest/lunch breaks between classes • Promote self-care
Low morale	Development of mental health difficulty or experience a worsening of an existing mental health issue	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Promote a positive culture of trust • Find ways to celebrate success (Award nights, outdoor theatre trips (indoor when possible), staff meals out) • Ensure staff know how to praise colleagues • Encourage positive and inclusive language to be used by staff
Staff feel bullied, harassed or excluded	Development of mental health difficulty or experience a worsening of an existing mental health issue	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Write a Bullying & Harassment policy and communicate to all teams and ensure policy is followed • Create a procedure where individuals are accountable for bullying/harassment actions • Ensure support is available should any staff are being bullied/harassed • Consider diversity and equality training
Lack of support, or fear about raising issues amongst staff	Development of mental health difficulty or experience a worsening of an existing mental health issue	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Encourage positive and constructive conversation between all staff • Create a procedure for staff to raise issues with the School manager • Investigate all issues and take appropriate action as soon as possible

Staff feel unsupported in the School	Development of mental health difficulty or experience a worsening of an existing mental health issue	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Make staff aware of support available within the organisation (e.g. line managers, Mental Health First Aiders) and support outside of the business (e.g. Counselling, occupational health, Health and Safety Officer) • Encourage staff to take Mental Health Awareness or Mental Health First Aid Course • Create positive changes to conversations around Mental Health
Staff feel unsure about changes happening in the Dance School and how they may be affected (likely as a cause of changes to the business model or timetable)	Development of mental health difficulty or experience a worsening of an existing mental health issue	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ensure good communication with staff throughout period of change and as you return to the Studio in a COVID world • Consult with staff at an early stage of transition, explaining what will happen and when • Ensure staff have the opportunity to raise concerns/ views • Monitor absences/changes in behaviour • Take into consideration presenteeism and how you can identify it • Ensure staff have appropriate training or support during times of change • Allocate a team member that all staff can approach throughout the change period • Ongoing communication between management and wider team
Lack of support for Staff with mental ill health	Experience a worsening of an existing mental health issue	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Create a procedure to keep individual safe should they experience an episode/crisis and to include this in your first aid policy • Open door policy for staff with trained persons (school counsellor/Mental Health First Aider) so individual can approach and be listened to as and when needed • Ensure support information is readily available on notice board/school intranet • Encourage individual needed to seek appropriate professional health • Encourage a support system within the establishment • Encourage a direct communication channel between parents & school should either parties are worried about the students so early intervention can take place • Encourage regular check-ins with a mentor or buddy (e.g. Wednesday morning coffee) • Additional support for those returning to the studio after long absence (such as COVID-19) • Encourage self-care practice
Lack of support for Staff with physical and/or learning disabilities	Development of mental health difficulty or experience a worsening of an existing mental health issue	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ensure sufficient physical support is available to the individuals • Encourage a support system within the establishment • Encourage regular check-ins with a mentor or buddy (e.g. Wednesday morning coffee) • Additional support for those returning to the studio after long absence • Monitor any changes in behaviour/early signs of mental health issues so early intervention can be provided

Helpful Resources

Applause for Thought (for Arts Industry MHFA England training rates)	applauseforthought@outlook.com	
Mind	www.mind.org.uk	0300 123 3393
Rethink	www.rethink.org	0121 522 7007
MHFA England	www.mhfaengland.org	0203 928 0760
Creative Response	www.creativeresponsearts.org	0125 271 6876
Anxiety UK	www.anxietyuk.org.uk	08444 775 774
British Association for Counselling & Psychotherapy Register	www.itsgoodtotalk.org.uk	01455 883 300
Fit for Work	www.fitforwork.org	0800 032 6235