

# Applause Youth Dance Festival

Your U.Dance Regional platform for the Midlands

## U.Dance in the Midlands Good Practice Guide

U.Dance events are performed or accessed by audiences of children, young people and members of the general public. This broad audience should be considered at all times.

### Recommendations

Below are recommendations for creating a well-considered piece of youth dance performance work, whether for on stage or on screen.

We encourage all youth dance leaders to read these recommendations carefully and consider them at regular points during your creation process. These recommendations are in place to encourage youth dance leaders to support young people to reach their potential and stay safe while presenting work to the public.

### Music, Sound and Accompaniments

Consider the dynamics and pace of music/sound. Think about how this influences the movement. Consider transitions between different sections of music/sound, don't chop pieces of music together with harsh edits but ensure music is fluid and well edited. Consider if a piece of music/sound has associations with TV programmes, adverts, popular culture etc, think about what messages that conveys to an audience.

Groups should not assume they can use any piece of music for free – the rights must be secured, and the rules vary depending on if your piece will be performed live or streamed online. U.Dance partners are unable to pay to secure rights to any music accompaniment to pieces, and will not be able to stream the piece online if the rights are not secured.

[See One Dance UK's Digital Music Licensing Best Practice Guide here.](#)

### Costumes

Choose costumes that are suitable for the age of the young people and that can be worn when performing to family audiences. Consider why you are costuming female presenting, male presenting and non-binary young people differently in relation to your choreographic idea; think about gender equality.

Rehearse in costume prior to any performances or filming. Check that the costumes are safe for performance and are not a distraction for the performer or audience. Consider how the costumes connect to the overall performance work.

## Projection

If wanting to use projection consider what it is needed for, whether it adds or distracts from the performance and whether it dominates the performance. Think about the screen scale and size on stage compared to a computer screen.

## Movement Content

Ensure movements are suitable for the age and ability of the dancers and can be performed safely, don't feel the need to use unnecessary tricks.

Consider how male and female presenting and non-binary young people are being presented in performance work and how they can be profiled fairly and equally.

Don't feel under pressure to use a theme, (it's not essential), but do give thought and development to the intention of the choreography. Is your dance inspired by a specific style, genre, idea a piece of music, artwork or professional choreography?

## Choreography

A number of examples of excellent youth dance practice involve the young people as choreographers and creative collaborators.

Try to empower young people to contribute to the making process, use choreographic tools, games and creative tasks to create content.

Where possible, watch professional choreography (live or recorded) to inspire work, however any work that directly copies or plagiarises previously created work will not be eligible. Consider getting an outside eye to watch rehearsals to provide feedback. Rework the choreography as necessary as the work progresses.

## Staging/Presentation

Think about how the dancers appear on stage and on screen (when filming), be inclusive and demonstrate the skills of the whole group.

Think about how the dancers exit and enter the stage. Consider how the group are spaced, the use of solo, duet, small group or ensemble material and how this relates to the visual design of the choreography.

### Top Tips:

- Always think about what an audience will experience when watching the performance.
- Always think about how the choices you make connect to the ideas you are trying to demonstrate within your performance.
- Expect feedback during the creation process and see this as a positive development to the work.

The following points must be adhered to in order to present youth dance work to public audiences in the East Midlands.

### When creating youth dance work:

- **Do not** use music with explicit language, swearing or language that could cause offence.
- **Do not** use music that contains 'bleeping' over swear words, themes which refer to violence, sexual references or that are misogynistic, derogatory or demeaning to others.
- **Do not** use costumes that are revealing or that sexualise young people.
- **Do not** use photographic or video projection that includes images that are not suitable for/ or that could cause offence to family audiences.
- **Do not** use flashing images or strobing for extended periods of time.
- **Do not** use movements that sexualise young people.
- **Do not** profile gender differently, unless relevant to a storyline or meaning.
- **Do not** plagiarise/directly copy professional choreography from live or film/ video content.
- Youth dance work should be original.

## Helpful Things to Know

The selection panel for the Midlands regional event at Applause Youth Festival will feed back to each of the performing groups regardless of whether the piece has been shortlisted to progress to U.Dance National Festival 2026 or not.

You'll be asked for a copy of the music, technical lighting requirements, costume design (whether a photograph or drawing) and any projection that is intended to be used at the live event when the technical information form deadline date is due. Failure to send completed information by that date may result in the group/soloist not being able to perform at the live event.

If members of the selection panel think a piece of U.Dance work does not follow this guidance a decision will be taken to not allow the work to be performed at the live event. This decision can be made prior to or after watching dress rehearsals on the day of the performance event.