**Safer Spaces Online Policy: July 2023**

**Introduction and purpose**

Rendez-Vous dance Ltd’ online spaces are for self-identifying LGBTQIA+ individuals wishing to access a safe space centring on LGBTQIA+ arts, culture, wellbeing and experience. This is inclusive of lesbian, gay, transgender, queer, intersex, asexual, non-binary people, gender fluid people, people of colour, older people, D/deaf and disabled members of our community.

This policy has been drafted to ensure that everyone who occupies an online space managed by Rendez-Vous dance Ltd feels safe, welcome and as comfortable as possible at all times.

**Safe space management**Meeting/event hosts are introduced at the opening of all of Rendez-Vous dance Ltd’ online spaces, stating pronouns and sharing an appearance description for visually impaired participants.

Participants are advised that if they feel unsafe at any point, or witness problematic behaviour, to privately message an identified host to let them know.

Anyone found to be deliberately disregarding this policy will be asked to leave or removed from the online space by the meeting host.

Rendez-Vous dance Ltd’ online spaces are clearly advertised as open to specific communities, this could be exclusively LGBTQIA+ identifying or based on geographic location. Often these spaces have been created due to a lack of provision for underserved communities.

Rendez-Vous dance Ltd reserves the right to ask participants to evidence insensitive information such as their location or practice.

**Cameras and Photography**
Rendez-Vous dance Ltd does not require participants to keep their camera on throughout meetings/events. However, it is encouraged for safety during physical events, such as online dance classes. If not on camera, participants are asked to make contact through chat functions.

Rendez-Vous dance Ltd does not currently record our online spaces. However on occasion, partner organisations may record meetings/events for accessibility or pre-recorded online content. Rendez-Vous dance Ltd’ core team will only agree to recording if permission from all participants has been received prior to the space opening.

Rendez-Vous dance Ltd do not take screenshots or pictures of our online spaces and ask all participants to refrain from doing so, including sharing on social media.

**Assumptions and Positive Intent**Rendez-Vous dance Ltd operates our online spaces on ‘positive intent’, recognising that all are at different stages in our journey as allies to each other. Our hosts do not make assumptions about identity and ask participants to do the same. Everyone’s experiences differ and we must be considerate to the intersectional communities who engage with us online.

Don’t make assumptions about someone’s identity and think about the ways that people from minority groups may be impacted in different ways by the issues you discuss. Be aware that your experiences of sex, sexuality and gender are not necessarily the same as everybody else in the room. Be aware of any position and privileges you may bring regarding for example your race, your class, your gender identity, your ability or your age. Try not to make generalising statements such as 'All lesbians hate X' - using ‘I’ or ‘me’ wherever possible, rather than ‘you’ or ‘we’.

**Chat/Private messaging**Participants are encouraged to use chat/private messaging to contact hosts with any questions, respond to the conversation and to share their contact information (if comfortable to do so).

Participants are asked to refrain from private messaging other participants in the space.

In order to access online events delivered via Zoom, participants must be 18 or older or be accompanied by someone 18 or older.

**Pronouns**

A pronoun is how you refer to someone, for example using she or they. Please ask people what their pronouns are if you are meeting them for the first time. Use their correct pronouns, even if the words are unfamiliar to you. If you make a mistake and refer to someone with the wrong pronoun, apologise and move on.

**Oppressive Behaviour**

Racism, sexism, classism, homophobia, biphobia, transphobia, ableism, fatphobia, ageism or discrimination on basis of ethnicity, immigration status, or religious, cultural, and/or spiritual beliefs, or any other kind of oppressive behaviour is unacceptable and will be challenged. Please do not use slurs that are not yours to use. For example, if you are white do not use racial slurs, even if you are being critical of them. Please give a choice for people to interact without having to talk if they don’t want to. If they are neurodivergent, do not tell people off if they want to talk or move when everybody else is sitting quietly and give space to people to go at their own pace.

**Sexual Harassment**

There is a zero tolerance policy to sexual harassment. This means no unwanted messaging, sharing of images or unsolicited contact with someone during or after a group has ended. This also means no inappropriate sexual comments or sexually based jokes, songs or taunts.

**Accessible Language**

Try to use clear, uncomplicated language and to avoid any acronyms and in-jokes. If you mention a theory or person, please give a brief description of who they are, no matter how well known you believe they are.

**Content Warnings**

Give people a heads up if you are going to discuss something that others might find upsetting. Sometimes upsetting things happen and we need to be able to talk about how we deal with them as a community. It’s important to have a space where we feel able to do this, and we hope that this event will provide that. However, not everyone is able to talk about everything all the time, so let people know if you are going to talk about something potentially upsetting, such as mental illness or domestic abuse. During breaks and other less formal settings, you can also do this informally by asking ‘is it okay if I talk about X thing?’

**Space to Speak**

Please be aware that it is difficult for those belonging to marginalised groups or minority groups to participate in discussions both online and in person. Do not talk over people and try to gauge whether it is appropriate for you to speak on certain topics. Try to give less confident and quieter people a chance to speak.

**Privacy and Confidentiality**

We will ask everybody to respect the fact that not everybody is “out” everywhere outside of this space so if you use social media, please do not share any contact information or identifiable information of other people without their explicit consent.

**Social Media**

Everything in this safer spaces agreement also extends to social media, including Twitter and Facebook, so keep that in mind when using social media today.

**Monitoring and reviewing**

It is the responsibility of the Executive Producer and the board to regularly review this Volunteer Policy to make sure it is always in accordance with legal requirements and best practice in relation to volunteer management. This will be done annually or when the need arises.