

Intimacy Policy

Dated: 18.10.22

Introduction:

This policy outlines the measure the Lir will put in to support students, staff, visiting directors and designers staging scenes of a sexual or physically intimate nature. The policy is working document, will be updated on a regular basis in keeping with changes to working practices in the professional theatre, film and TV drama sectors.

This policy assumes that all actors have agency in the creative process and are free to give or withhold consent at all times.

Definitions:

Consent:

In Irish law “a person consents to an act if he or she freely and voluntarily agrees to engage in that act.”

A person does not consent if he or she:

- is forced, coerced, or threatened with force, or is genuinely afraid of force being used against them or another person
- is being prevented from leaving at the time at which the action takes place
- is not fully informed as to the specific nature of the action
- a person can change their mind and retract consent at any time, even if previous consent was given. Each person has the right to their own body autonomy.
- a person who does not actively resist is not automatically consenting. Consent must be enthusiastically volunteered.

Intimacy in Performance:

Intimacy in Performance is defined as any moment in a class, workshop, rehearsal, showing or performance which portrays intimate physical contact and/or nudity or partial nudity. This may include, but is not restricted to: kissing, movements which imply sexual actions, portrayal of sexually traumatic events and sexual violence, non-consensual sexual violence.

Intimacy Management

In practice in the Lir, a teacher, workshop leader or director can give permission for a performer to be intimate with another performer but both performers must consent to the proposition.

Wellbeing and counselling support is available for any cast, creative or crew who needs support in the making of Intimate Content. Any staff or student who has concerns about consent or how a scene of a sexual or physically intimate nature is being managed should talk to the Academic Administrator of their Course Director in the first instance.

The management of intimacy scenes will be managed by a qualified Intimacy Director or by the Movement Director in consultation with an Intimacy Director.

The Intimacy Director, or Movement Director in consultation with an Intimacy Director, will:

During rehearsals:

- Train, oversee and communicate the ongoing process of Consent for performers, other cast, creatives and crew safeguarding them from physical, emotional or intellectual harm.
- Encourage appropriate language and terminology in the creation of intimate content.
- Oversee the process of rehearsal, choreography and the staging of intimate scenes.
- Advocate for the safety of performers of intimate action while realising the Director's creative vision, context and the framework of storytelling.
- Co-ordinate with the Director and Stage Management team on scheduling of intimacy sessions during rehearsal sessions.
- Liaise with the Costume Designer regarding action/adaptation of clothing and modesty garments where required.
- Liaise with the Set Designer if adaptations to the set or props are required.
- Agree appropriate intimacy sessions in the rehearsal schedule to choreograph safe and consented intimate choreography.
- Notate choreography of intimate scenes for reference if required throughout the rehearsals and run.
- For scenes that contain sexual violence or coercion, a stunt director may be required to work with the Intimacy Director/Movement Director
- Aftercare, 'de-rolling' and check ins after each Intimacy rehearsal with each actor to assess that they are still comfortable and in agreement with continuing the work.

During tech rehearsals:

- Oversee intimacy choreography staging during Technical and Dress Rehearsals.
- Brief other cast and crew about the nature of the content they may witness and assess their consent. This will be completed by the Stage Manager/Intimacy Captain if the Intimacy Director is not available to do so.

During the run of the show:

- Be available for change of choreography should the consent of the performers change during the run, or due to any injury or sickness.
- Regularly touch base with the Intimacy Captain with regard to the wellbeing of the performers and if any further support is needed during the run.

Stage Manager/Intimacy Captain role:

The Lir will assign an 'Intimacy Captain' for the run of each production. The Intimacy Captain will manage pre-show intimacy calls during the run. This role will normally be taken by a designated member of the stage management team. The Stage Manager needs to consent to take on this role. If they are unwilling to do so, another member of the stage management team may be asked to take on the Intimacy Captain role.

The Intimacy Captain will:

- Manage intimacy calls before each show. Allow for time to discuss any issues. Documentation of any issues or changes.
- Be present in intimacy sessions as a third party.
- Take notes and maintain the consented choreography throughout the run of the show.
- Keep a log to write any shifts in choreography so they can notify the actors if they stray from the consented choreography.
- Have recorded copy of the agreed choreography, in order to contact the Intimacy Director/Movement Director for any required alterations.
- Inform the cast who is in the room before running/rehearsing intimate content.
- Regularly check in with the actors after each performance to assess that they are still comfortable and in agreement with continuing the work.

SMTT students will be offered training in the role of Intimacy Captains as part of their ongoing course work.

Intimacy Captains will be supported by their tutors in the delivery of the role.

Additional Considerations:

A minimum of 24 hours' notice should be given to actors before the rehearsal of intimate scenes.

Intimacy rehearsals should be held in a quiet, warm, safe space with the minimum of people possible present - ideally the actors performing the intimate content, director, stage manager and Intimacy Director/Movement Director only.

A sign outside the rehearsal room door will state that an intimacy session is in process and a screen will be placed over any windows that might threaten the complete privacy for the actors.

Intimacy choreography/nudity will be rehearsed in a closed rehearsal room with only required personnel (required Cast, Director, Stage Manager, Intimacy Director) until the scenes are in the context of a run or by agreement with the relevant cast.

A plan of the proposed intimacy/nudity will be put in place prior to rehearsals so that expectations and planning can be managed for all relevant departments.

Conversations around the management of intimate action will be made early in the process and include the actors at the time of casting and/or as early as possible in rehearsals.

Props, costumes and an Intimacy Kit will be available in the intimacy rehearsals where possible.

Actors should not practice a scene with intimacy unless the Intimacy Captain is present.

A contingency plan will be put in place if agreed choreography cannot be performed.

Images containing intimacy will not be used when marketing the show, unless the consent of the performers involved has been given to use such images. No photographs taken during rehearsal or performances will be distributed online or otherwise without the actor's prior consent.

If the intimate scenes are to be filmed for archive purposes, agreement should be made about how and where this material is stored at when it should be deleted. Actors will be explicitly informed if the intimate content is to be photographed/captured and may

withdraw their consent, in which case none of these scenes should be photographed/recorded. If they consent to the taking of the images, the use of and storing of the images, actors can ask for these images to be deleted at any time even if they have agreed a date for them to be deleted.

Hygiene expectations will be explained.

Aftercare, 'de-rolling' and check ins after each Intimacy rehearsal with each actor to assess that they are still comfortable and in agreement with continuing the work.

Intimacy Kit:

The Intimacy Captain will maintain an Intimacy Kit for all shows. An appropriate Intimacy Kit for a show might include:

- Robes standing by if there are prolonged periods of the tech when actors may not be fully covered.
- Modesty garments as required
- Prosthetics
- Tapes/glue
- Sanitary Wear
- Mouthwash