



*American Dance Academy*  
*2017/2018 Handbook*

**A Guide for Students and Parents**



# *American Dance Academy Handbook*

## **A Guide for Students and Parents**

*As a condition of enrollment at American Dance Academy (ADA) students and their parents or guardians agree to abide by all the policies set forth by ADA, its director, faculty, and staff. ADA reserves the right to terminate any student's enrollment at any time for misconduct or inappropriate actions by either the student or his or her parent(s).*

Welcome to American Dance Academy!

This handbook will serve as your guide to American Dance Academy and its philosophy of dance education.

We take our roles as a mentors and teachers in your child's life very seriously. It is our objective to inspire a passion for the art of dance in every child who passes through our doors. In the process, we strive to set the right example and help your child (and you) create memories that will last a lifetime.

### **Philosophy**

American Dance Academy is committed to providing high-quality dance classes to enhance the overall development of the child. We provide a safe and child-centered environment to encourage our students to explore dance with qualified, nurturing teachers.

We believe that dance training encourages young people to develop a positive self-image as they increase awareness of their physical being. Along with improving coordination skills and developing muscular awareness, dance classes give children the freedom to express themselves through movement.

The highest educational standards are expected from all American Dance Academy faculty members. They are lifelong learners who continue to educate themselves through certification programs, teacher-training schools, conferences, and other learning opportunities.

## **ABOUT THIS HANDBOOK**

Celebrating our 25th anniversary, our school has been a leader in dance education. We believe that our success comes as a result of providing solid training and quality service, as well as our underlying belief in the strength of our organization. We have created this handbook to offer our students and their parents a clear understanding of their commitments and responsibility to the school.

- Dates and/or expenses listed in this handbook are subject to change. Please check the website and your newsletters for updates.

**Key contact information for American Dance Academy:**

126 Lantana Drive

Phone: 302-234-9900

Fax: 302-234-9906

Miss Darlene's Email: [DANCEatADA@comcast.net](mailto:DANCEatADA@comcast.net)

Website: [www.DANCEatADA.com](http://www.DANCEatADA.com)

Miss Kelly's (Office Manager) Email: [DANCEatADA@verizon.net](mailto:DANCEatADA@verizon.net)

**Calendar of Events & Closure Dates: See separate paper**

## FOR OUR STUDENTS

The first step to becoming a successful dancer is making a solid commitment to your classes. Strong technique is a key ingredient and class is where you develop that technique. Come to each class prepared to learn and without personal distractions. Class time is your chance to focus on yourself, so try to leave your concerns or worries at the studio door. True progress is made when you look at each class as an opportunity to become better at what you love to do. Dance full-out, stretch a little further, become more aware of your technique, and make the most of every class.

Respect for the teachers is essential. Listen to each correction given, whether it's directed at you or another dancer. A correction is an honor; it shows you how much a teacher cares about your progress as a dancer. Always say thank you when a teacher or choreographer offers you constructive criticism. Nothing can stop those students who apply themselves in every class and appreciate their teachers' knowledge and experience.

## FOR THE PARENTS: "WE'RE IN THIS TOGETHER"

We believe that children's success depends on the support of their parents or guardians. Because your commitment to the process makes an enormous difference, we encourage you to be a part of your child's dance education.

Our programs rely on a positive atmosphere and educational experience for our faculty, students and their parents. Cooperation between all is expected. Showing respect—for other parents, the students, and the faculty—makes an important impression on the children. You are a role model for your child about how to interact with others in a professional setting.

Your child's presence at all classes is imperative. The spirit of teamwork and the lesson of dedication are a big part of our school's educational process.

Parents and teachers may look at a child's learning from different perspectives. However, we believe they share a common goal: to ensure that every child receives the best possible training, both physically and mentally. Mutual respect among our faculty and our students' parents provides the children with the ultimate care and education.

## Special Information for Parents of Preschool Students

Our purpose is to provide the highest-quality preschool education in a secure, nurturing, and stimulating environment. American Dance Academy serves the physical, emotional, and intellectual needs of the preschool students. We meet these goals with our age-appropriate curriculum and ongoing communication with parents.

The first few weeks of classes serve as an introductory phase to help students become comfortable with the overall dance experience, the classroom, their teacher, and their classmates.

Right from the beginning we focus on your child's coordination, listening skills, musical awareness, and developing imagination. We accomplish this through age-appropriate music and song, simple stretching exercises, ballet and tap basics, and games in an environment of creativity.

Preschool dance is about helping children learn to tap into their imaginations and express themselves creatively, not necessarily about learning steps (although they do get introduced to some basic steps). So don't be disappointed if your child doesn't pirouette around the house or look like a budding ballerina right away.

Preschool students (PS1, PS2 & Child) perform one dance routine in our annual recital.

### Separation From the Parent

The process of separating from the parent as the child attends dance class is an important accomplishment of preschool children.

As children mature, they begin to identify themselves as independent personalities. In separating from you, the parent, your child is learning

- to develop an interest in the activities of the dance class;
- to feel comfortable with other children in the class;
- to understand that his/her parent will come back and pick him/her up;
- to understand that all parents leave their children and come back for them.

It is important to know that at times young children will explore the limits of attending dance class and say they don't want to go. This period may occur anytime, but it is usually short-lived. Here are some suggestions that might help you handle the situation:

- Emphasize what the child is doing at the dance class rather than what you do while he/she is in class.
- Before you leave, see that the child is involved in an activity or is in the hands of a teacher.
- Avoid prolonged good-byes.
- Ask the teacher for help in separation. We expect the crying (and usually the tears are for the parent's benefit).

## **It May Not Be the Right Time**

If your child cries or does not want to take class, don't panic. If we push children and create more stress than they are already experiencing, they may come to perceive dance class as a bad experience. That kind of negativity could make them apprehensive about dance for a long time, which isn't good for anyone involved. Never force your child into the classroom.

If your child stops attending class within the first month, the registration fee will be credited to the following year or summer camp. We encourage you to have your child try again next year.

We recommend that children be encouraged to practice at home but not forced to do so. Repetition is one of the key elements for success with preschool dance students; the more they practice, the more confident they will feel. Practicing with your child allows you to join in the dance experience.

## **FOR ALL PARENTS AND STUDENTS**

### **Understanding Dance Education**

As a parent, you play an important role in supporting your student financially, but your emotional support is of equal—and perhaps even greater—value. Encourage your child to be the best that he or she can be regardless of what others may achieve. Dance is an individual art form and children need to be allowed to achieve at a pace that's comfortable. No two students will progress at the same rate, even if they experience the exact same training. It's important to encourage children to focus on themselves, give their all, and be satisfied with their own accomplishments.

Not all children will develop into professional dancers. One of the primary goals of our faculty is to teach life lessons and skills that offer children the best chance for success. Dance education encompasses far more than technique and the steps your children learn. We believe the discipline of dance training gives young people a better understanding of commitment through learning, experiencing the spirit of teamwork, and discovering what they can accomplish through hard work. Our goal is to educate the minds, bodies, and souls of our students, teaching them the skills needed for a successful life, whether or not they stay involved in dance.

- You play an important role in supporting your student financially, but your emotional support is of equal—and perhaps even greater—value.

### **Class Placement**

The school faculty meets regularly to discuss the students' progress and/or placement. It is our policy to offer appropriate opportunities to every child.

Placement decisions are derived from many years of teaching experience. Often a child is placed in a particular group or class where he or she will feel confident, in

order to promote the development of self-esteem. Some students who are placed in a higher level become discouraged, only to lose their passion for dance. Others respond to the challenge of being in a class with students who are more proficient by pushing themselves to work harder. Placement is highly individual and the factors that go into the decision are complex.

## **Classroom Observation**

Every week parents may observe classes on our closed-circuit TV located in the school lobby. During the first week of each month parents may observe classes through the studio windows. The shades will be drawn at all other times.

In-class observations take place during the last full week of January. This is the chance for you to see firsthand what the classroom experience is like for your child.

Never disrupt class. During the in-class observation week (or at any time if the door to the classroom is open), please refrain from shouting instructions or distracting your child in any way.

## **Medical Information**

Parents must notify the director/and or teachers regarding children who use an inhaler or who may require medications during their time at American Dance Academy. It is also important to inform the director and/or teachers about your child's existing medical conditions or learning disabilities at the time of registration and throughout the school year. Our teachers are trained dance professionals, who are anxious to work with all children and personalities, and the more we know about your child, the better the dance experience will be for all involved. All information about our students is confidential.

## **Dos and Don'ts**

Some parents may compare their child's progress or class placement to another child's. Watch for this behavior in your children as well and encourage them to focus instead on their own accomplishments.

Looking to other students for inspiration is good; however, making negative comparisons distracts children from focusing on becoming stronger dancers. In addition, speaking negatively about your child's teachers, fellow students, or other parents in front of your child—or other students—could result in problems far beyond your original concerns. Often children will imitate a parent's behavior with other adults or authority figures.

Children learn important lessons from their teachers and parents, acquiring behavior patterns through their example. Our school's faculty takes that responsibility seriously. It's our philosophy to encourage our students to feel, think, and act respectfully toward their peers, the adults in their lives, and themselves. If you have questions or concerns about your child's dance education (such as

progress or class placement), please discuss them with your child’s teacher or the director. Talking only to other parents can lead to misinformation and confusion. Please contact the school office to set up an appointment; do not approach your child’s teacher or the director between or during classes or make contact outside of the school.

If you do request a conference, please listen carefully to what your child’s teachers have to say. They spend a significant amount of time with your child and offer expertise in the field of dance education.

- Class placement of students is highly individual and the factors that go into the decision are complex.

## **STAYING INFORMED**

We work hard to make the dance experience organized and fun. Keeping you informed is one of our primary goals. Please read all newsletters and other school information.

Newsletters and important updates are printed and handed out to our students at the conclusion of class. Some info from the newsletters and updates are emailed to you and posted on the American Dance Academy website and Facebook page.

If you have any questions regarding the information distributed, we encourage you to contact the office at 302-234-9900 between the hours of 3PM-8PM Mon to Thurs and 9AM-1:45PM on Saturdays.

We answer email on a daily basis, except on days we are closed. Feel free to email questions to the office at [DANCEatADA@comcast.net](mailto:DANCEatADA@comcast.net).

**Website:** [www.DANCEatADA.com](http://www.DANCEatADA.com)

We are constantly updating our website. News, important parent and student information, contact information, and more are available online 24 hours a day.

### **Facebook Page**

“Like” the American Dance Academy page on Facebook to receive daily updates on school events. Please invite your family and friends to “like” the school.

Please do not post questions on the school’s Facebook page. Instead, please email them directly to Miss Darlene at [DANCEatADA@comcast.net](mailto:DANCEatADA@comcast.net).

## **Weather Cancellations**

School closures due to severe weather conditions will be announced one hour prior to your class time. Some times we are able to start our day but when a storm comes in the evening we feel it is best to close for the safety of our staff and students. Notifications of weather cancellations will be emailed, posted on the Facebook page, and announced on the school's outgoing voicemail message. You are entitled to a make-up class if we close due to weather. You may take a class at the same level if offered or one level below or above the current level. You may also try a new class as a make up.

## **Dress Code Requirements**

American Dance Academy maintains a dress code to encourage concentration and a sense of inclusiveness (variations in attire can be distracting and contribute to feelings of inequality). Uniformity in dancewear allows the teachers to assess how well the students are implementing the technique being taught, problems with alignment, and other important aspects of dance training.

- Students should carry their dancewear, shoes, and other belongings in a dance bag. Please print your child's name on the bag as well as on all of its contents.
- Dancewear is to be kept in good repair and laundered on a regular basis.
- Boys age 10 and older must wear a dance belt.
- Watches, jewelry, and safety pins should not be worn to class.
- Dance shoes should never be worn outside.
- Female students should wear their hair tightly secured and styled away from the face; a neat bun is preferred.
- Students are expected to observe good personal hygiene habits. Deodorant is required for students age 10 and older.

## **Dancewear and Shoes (Individual)**

American Dance Academy also offers dancewear and shoes for individual purchase at any time during the school year. Pointe shoes are not kept in stock. All other shoes can be ordered if we do not have them in stock.

## **Registration Fee**

An annual registration fee of \$30 per family covers the cost of mailings, insurance, handbooks, website, printing and so on. Registration fees are not refundable with the exception of preschool students who are determined to be unready for dance and may receive a credit for the following season.

## **Tuition and Expense Policy**

Full monthly tuition is due prior to the start of the new month but no later than the 8th of each month. Tuition is paid through cash, check, credit card or automatic withdrawal from your credit or debit card account. Please write your child's name in the memo portion if paying by check. If you pay with cash, please ask for a receipt.

We offer a 10 percent discount on annual tuition that is paid in full by August 31st and a 5 percent discount if paid in two installments (one by August 31st and the second by January 31st).

Please note: tuition is based on the season regardless of how many weeks are in a given month.

## **Additional Fees**

Tuition does not include the registration fee, dancewear, shoes, costumes, recital tickets, private lessons, summer classes or special events.

## **Discipline Policy**

In order to maintain a happy, healthy, professional environment, students are taught the importance of being a part of the group. We encourage students to have respect for other students, the teachers and staff, and studio property, and we foster the development of good habits and compliance with rules of conduct.

Our staff and faculty are trained to use constructive techniques of discipline to maintain classroom control and handle individual misbehavior.

- Children who exhibit unacceptable behavior or attitudes are told what is wrong and directed to a positive alternative approach or behavior.
- If a child strikes another child, the two are respectfully separated and each is asked to explain what happened. They are then asked to help solve the problem, talk to each other, and reconcile with one another.
- Children who are disruptive will be respectfully asked to stop the behavior. If the behavior is repeated, they will be reminded of it and told how it affects others. If the disruption continues, the children involved will be asked to sit down for a short period of time (usually three to five minutes) before rejoining the class.
- If a child's misbehavior continues to disrupt the class, the parent or guardian will be called to pick up the child.

## **Termination of Enrollment**

In certain circumstances, when it is in the best interest of one or more students, it may be necessary for the school owner or director to terminate a student's enrollment. Every effort will be made to correct a problematic situation before terminating enrollment. Reasons for termination of enrollment include the following:

- Disruptive or dangerous behavior by students or their parents
- Abuse of other children, staff, or property
- Inability of American Dance Academy to meet the child's needs

## **Arrival and Departure**

We encourage students to arrive 10 minutes before class starts.

For their safety, children under age 10 should be picked up immediately after class. Students ages 10 and older must be picked up no more than 5 minutes after their class is completed. Please note that pulling up to the curb and/or leaving your car unattended by an adult can result in receiving a ticket.

## **Attendance**

All students are expected to attend their regularly scheduled classes. Each class offers a step forward in the educational process. A missed class could leave a child one step behind the other students. During the months of January through May, choreography for the recital will be taught and rehearsed. It is important for children to feel completely confident with the choreography and the year-end performance. Missing class during this period could result in frustration for the students, their teachers and classmates.

## **Tardiness**

Dance is a physical activity that requires the body to be warmed up in order to execute movement safely. Late students miss the proper warm-up and/or barre and therefore may sustain injury. Students who arrive more than 10 minutes late may be asked to observe class for reasons of personal safety.

## **Class Visitors**

Safety issues and legal responsibilities make it impossible for us to allow students to bring visitors into the classroom. Students should not invite siblings, other relatives, or friends to their classes with the exception of special events such as "Bring a Friend Week" and in-school performances.

## **Makeup Classes**

Students who miss a class will have the opportunity to make it up with another similar class. Please check with the office to determine the best makeup class for your child.

## **Lost and Found**

Please mark all dancewear, shoes, and personal items with your child's name. We will make every effort to locate and return lost items; however, we cannot be responsible for any items that your child brings to class.

## **Illness**

Colds, flu, and other contagious diseases occur frequently and spread easily among children. To help protect your own child's health and to minimize the possibility of contagion at school, please keep your child at home if you observe any of the following symptoms:

- Nasal discharge that is green or yellow
- Complaints of ear pain
- Consistent cough
- Severe sore throat
- Eyes that are pink, burning, itching, or producing discharge
- Diarrhea or vomiting
- Fever

If these symptoms or other conditions deemed contagious are observed in your child during a class, you will be called to pick up your child immediately. Please notify us if the doctor has deemed your child non-contagious before they begin class.

When your child has a fever, please keep him/her at home until the temperature returns to normal. If there are any lingering signs of illness, such as glassy or watery eyes, listlessness, and drowsiness, please keep your child at home. This will help to ensure that the illness has passed and that your child will be well enough to resume class activities the following week.

## **Emergency Evacuation**

Although we have never experienced an emergency evacuation at the school, we are prepared for such a circumstance. Students are to evacuate quietly and walk in single file as quickly as possible to the designated area, where teachers will check roll. Students and teachers are to return to classrooms and buildings when the all-clear signal is given.

## **Parking Lot Safety**

The school is home to children of all ages. Please enter and exit our parking lot with extreme caution. Never park your vehicle in any area that is not a designated parking space. If you park in a space that is very close to the building or its windows, please do not leave your car idling. Please do not allow siblings to play in the parking lot.

## **Student and Parent Use of Social Media**

Use of Facebook, Twitter, LinkedIn, blogging, and other online social-media vehicles is commonplace. This policy is intended to provide American Dance Academy students and parents with guidelines to eliminate any confusion concerning the use of social media.

- You DO have permission to click “Like” on any of our email blasts and “Share” them on your page.
- You DO NOT have permission to reveal any information that compromises American Dance Academy. By that we mean you are forbidden to share personal information about the director, faculty, other students and their families, or anything that is proprietary and/or confidential to them or American Dance Academy.
- Students and parents should neither claim nor imply that they are speaking on behalf of American Dance Academy.
- Never post anything that could compromise the self-esteem of students who attend American Dance Academy.
- Please do NOT post home videos of choreography. If we have something posted on our website or Facebook page you may share that. American Dance Academy owns the copyright to all choreography taught at the school.
- Respect the law, including those laws governing defamation, discrimination, harassment, copyright and fair use. As stated in this handbook, parents and students should never post negative comments about other schools or teachers. Also, please do not post negative comments about school activities such as competitions, conventions, and performances or about the directors of those events.
- Ensure that your social networking conduct is consistent with all of the policies contained in this handbook.



The recital offers our students a professionally directed performance that allows them to present to their families and friends the results of a year’s hard work, dedication, and progress.

A big part of dance training includes learning through performance. Although performance opportunities can help prepare some students for a possible career in dance, they also contribute to children’s success in non-dance activities. The experience helps build self-esteem and confidence, which can result in better in-school presentations, improved social skills, and strong college and job interview skills. The rehearsal process is a tremendous learning experience as well. It helps the children develop retention skills, and by working with their classmates on a group performance, they learn the positive aspects of working as a team to create the best end result.

**Recital Handbook**

We distribute a recital handbook with all the information parents and students need to know to make the recital experience enjoyable for all.

**Costumes**

We spend many hours determining the correct costumes for each class. They are always age appropriate and of the highest quality possible. Costumes include all accessories (hats, gloves, etc.), but do not include shoes and tights.

In an effort to ensure that costumes are delivered in time for school photographs and an organized distribution to our students, costume orders are placed in December. Costume manufacturers do not accept cancellations or offer refunds; therefore the school does not refund costume deposits.

**Costume Payment Schedule**

Costumes will not be ordered until they are paid for in full. Parents or guardians accept full responsibility for all expenses, including surcharges and postage for costumes that are ordered late. American Dance Academy is not responsible if costumes are not received in time for the recital due to late payments. Costume payments are the sole responsibility of the parent or guardian.

- Costumes are always age appropriate and of the highest quality possible.

## **Recital Tickets**

Tickets for the annual recital will go on sale online and are reserved seating.

No one is admitted to the recital without a ticket. Infants and children who may have a hard time remaining seated during the entire performance should not attend.

## **Recital Photos**

Photos will be taken at American Dance Academy. Dates and times are subject to change.

Students may choose to have solo portraits made in any or all of their costumes. There is no obligation to purchase photos. Please arrive at least half an hour before your child's scheduled time since photo shoots tend to run ahead of schedule.

## **Important Recital Dates**

When registering your child at American Dance Academy, you commit yourself and/or your child to the recital dates and events unless written notice is given by November 1st.

# **ADDITIONAL INFORMATION AND ACTIVITIES**

## **Bring-a-Friend Week**

The last week in October 24th –29th is “Bring-a-Friend Week.” Students may bring a friend (similar in age) to the school to experience a fun class designed for them and their guests. Students' friends attend class free of charge during this week.

## **Summer Program and Camps**

Each summer American Dance Academy offers summer programs and camps for both current and new students. Summer activities are for children ages 3 to 18. A

complete brochure of all summer programs will be distributed in February. We suggest early registration as these programs do sell out, especially the camps.

## **Studio Rental**

The studios are available for rental for meetings, rehearsals, and other activities. Some tables, chairs and sound systems are available. Whether you're planning a one-time, weekly, or monthly event, give us a call to determine whether we can accommodate your group or activity.

## **Birthday Parties**

We offer several birthday party options for both boys and girls. Parties are themed and can be dance related or not. Most birthday parties are scheduled for Saturday or Sunday afternoons. Please contact the office for more information.

## **A FINAL NOTE**

WELCOME TO AMERICAN DANCE ACADEMY! We look forward to an exciting, rewarding season!