

MOUNT DORA
SCHOOL
OF
BALLET

Parent/Student
Handbook



“To touch, to move, to inspire. This is the true gift of dance.”

Dear Parents and Students,

We are pleased and excited to welcome you to another year at the Mount Dora School of Ballet. Our priority is not only to train our students to become technically proficient dancers, but more importantly to teach the lifelong lessons of commitment, the value of hard work and discipline, and to inspire a passion for the arts. Ballet also develops poise, and encourages confidence in presenting oneself.

Students moving through the carefully planned curriculum are gaining strength in technique and developing artistry. The MDSB goal is to explore and develop the talent within each and every student.

Ballet technique is the foundation of our curriculum. Our faculty follows a syllabus steeped in the Russian tradition. The school has three distinct divisions. Our Children's Division is for students ages 4 to 7 and our Classical Ballet Division is for students 8 to 18. We also have an Open Division for students 8 and up with classes in Character Dance, and Contemporary.

Performing is a crucial component of the overall dance education. The process of classwork, rehearsal, and performance provides the dancers the opportunity to grow in their talents, their love of ballet and their personal maturity. Our annual Spring Performance is a full length ballet. It includes all students beginning at age 4. We have performed "The Little Mermaid", "Alice in Wonderland", and the "Enchanted Child" along with many other beloved ballets.

The Mount Dora School of Ballet is committed to giving back to our community through our performances. MDSB enriches the community with outreach programs presenting lecture demonstrations in schools, performing with the Florida Lake Symphony, performing in the holiday lighting of the town and other venues.

Please take time to familiarize yourself with this handbook, as it contains important information for our parents and students. The entire MDSB faculty is dedicated to excellence in dance education. Though a student's training takes years of dedication, practice, and hard work, the rewards are unrivaled.

We are committed to working cooperatively with our parents, and students to make this a successful year!

Very truly yours,

Kathryn Wheeler
Artistic Director

Registration Information

Prospective Students

Prospective students and families are encouraged to visit MDSB, tour the facility, and meet staff and faculty.

The faculty evaluates students entering the Classical Ballet Division. Each student is placed in the appropriate level based upon age and ability. Students are continually evaluated throughout the year in order to receive the greatest opportunity for improvement. Placement is at the discretion of the Artistic Director.

Regular Enrollment

Registration materials are available at www.mountdoraschoolofballet.com or at the Mount Dora School of Ballet office.

Required Payments

Registration Fee

An annual, non-refundable, non-transferable, Registration Fee is required for each student.

Performance Fee

There is an annual Performance Fee for our Spring Performance. One costume is included in that fee. Additional costumes require a separate fee. One-half of your Performance Fee is due by October 15th; the remainder is due by November 15th.

Tuition Fee

Tuition is based on a yearly schedule that can be paid in nine equal payments. It is due on the 1st of each month, September through May, regardless of the student's attendance. There will be no refunds due to the student missing classes. The Tuition Fee is considered late after the 10th of each month. A \$10.00 late fee is added to the amount past due. If at any time your child will not be coming back to classes, the Artistic Director must be given two (2) weeks notice in writing; your tuition responsibility will continue until this is done.

Families with two or more students are eligible for a discount on the 2nd child.

Returned Checks

Checks returned for insufficient funds will be subject to a \$35.00 fee.

Levels of Study

Students in our Children's Division, ages 3 to 7, are placed according to their birthday as of September 1. In our Classical Ballet Division, ages 8 to 18, students are evaluated according to age, ballet technique and physical development. Many other factors are considered when placing our students in this division such as musicality, flexibility, and coordination.

While a student may spend two or even three years in a level, there is no concept of failing a level. Students are placed where we believe they will be most successful and continually progress.

Pointe Work

The decision to introduce a student to pointe comes after an evaluation of several components. Age, training, physique, attitude and potential are all carefully considered. Students develop at different rates, so it is an individual evaluation. Once the dancer has been approved for pointe, the parents and student will be invited to attend an informative meeting regarding pointe shoes and pointe class, and a training manual will be reviewed and handed out.

Dress Code

Uniform

Maintaining proper uniform sets a tone of professionalism and respect for MDSB, its teachers, and training. All students are required to be in their class uniform.

Students do not wear warm-ups during class as it inhibits the teacher's ability to properly observe the dancers' placement, muscle development, and movement.

Jewelry

Students must refrain from wearing jewelry during class, with the exception of small earrings.

Hair

Girl's hair must be pulled back and placed in a classical ballet bun at the crown of the head. The bun must include a hair net and hair or bobby pins (all of which should match the color of the student's hair as closely as possible). Bangs should be smoothed back against the head using clips, gel, or hairspray.

Gentlemen should have their hair neatly combed and out of their faces.

Please check with the office if you need a lesson in the classical bun.

Entering and Exiting the Mount Dora School of Ballet

To promote modesty, as well as help muscles stay warm, students should wear warm-ups or other street clothing over their dancewear when entering and exiting MDSB. Dance shoes are ruined if they are worn on sidewalks or streets.

Absentee Policy

Classes missed for family vacations, voluntary absences, school events, and occasional sick days are not reimbursed. Students are encouraged to make-up missed classes. Classes should be made-up in the same level or one level below in the semester that the absence occurs. Please call the office to schedule make-up classes.

Policies and Procedures

Attendance

Regular attendance promotes steady skill development and class cohesion.

Absentee Notification

Please call the office to notify MDSB of your student's absence.

Sick Dancer Policy

Dancers should be fever-free for at least 24 hours without the use of medication such as Advil and Tylenol before returning to school. Dancers who are experiencing severe cold symptoms, even without fever, should remain at home until they are feeling better and symptoms subside.

Medical Information

Please inform the office and the faculty of any medical concerns or conditions your child might have. This should be included on your registration form or in writing so that all records are accurate. Should an emergency arise, attempts will be made to reach a student's parent. If a parent/guardian is not able to be reached, the emergency contact provided on the registration form will be called.

Late Arrival

Students arriving fifteen minutes or later may be asked to sit and observe class. This is to protect the student who will not be properly warmed up.

Parent Observation

All the studios have one-way windows so that you may view your child during their class. We ask that you keep the hall quiet at all times so as not to distract the dancers. One week of classes during the end of the 1st semester will be open to classroom observation. Observers should enter the classroom before the class begins and leave after the class ends. Photographs are allowed; video-taping is prohibited. Please do not post someone else's child to your social media.

Costume Dress-up Week

The week prior to Halloween is our Costume Dress-up Week. Please bring your child's costume to class. Your teacher will determine the time to put costumes on. If your student has multiple classes during the week, they will bring their costume on their final day of class that week.

Personal Belongings

Please mark all belongings with your child's name. Do not bring valuables to the studio. Though MDSB is not responsible for lost or misplaced items, there is a lost and found box located in the office.

Food and Drink

No food or drink, except water in a closed water bottle, is permitted during class.

Performances

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Rehearsal Policies for All Performances

In our effort to make the MDSB performances a rewarding experience that educates our dancers in the rigors and fun of preparing for a performance, we incorporate professional standards.

Mandatory rehearsal attendance is a standard in all performing arts. Our dancers, parents and teachers alike are excited and proud on performance days. To that end, we make every effort to ensure our dancers are well prepared and well-rehearsed. We thank you for supporting and adhering to our standards.

In-Studio Rehearsals

These rehearsals take place at the Mount Dora School of Ballet.

Blocking Rehearsals

This rehearsal is in the theatre. It is for the precise staging of dancers in order to facilitate the ballet. The director and faculty show the dancers their place on the stage, their entrances and exits, and the stage manager and director work with lighting design and sound.

Dress Rehearsal

This rehearsal directly precedes our performances. The Dress Rehearsal is run with full set changes, full dress with costume and make-up, use of props, backdrop changes, entrances and exits, music synchronization, and with other dancers who may be in the scene. If a dancer is not in attendance for Dress Rehearsal, they will not be able to dance in our Spring Performance. Dress Rehearsals are closed to parents.

Winter

The students in the Classical Ballet Division are invited to audition for our winter performances. The Mount Dora School of Ballet presents performances of the Nutcracker and excerpts of other ballets to the community to enrich, educate and entertain our audiences.

Spring

The Mount Dora School of Ballet's annual Spring Performance is a full length ballet. It includes all students beginning at age 4. We have performed "Cinderella", "Alice in Wonderland", and the "Enchanted Child" along with many other beloved ballets.

Full cast rehearsals are a great benefit to our students. Our young dancers have the opportunity to see many of the other dances, observe how they fit into the story, and learn how a ballet is put together. Rehearsals in the studio and in the theatre build the dancers confidence, and promote safety during performances. Our dancers work very hard for their performance. Please mark your calendars for these mandatory rehearsals, and performance dates. (To Be Announced).

Communication

Email

This is our primary communication source for parents to stay updated. We are using Constant Contact for news, important dates, performance information and other information pertinent to our parents. Please make sure we have an up to date email address.

Phone

Our staff is available from 3:00 until 8:00 on Monday through Thursday. Parents will be contacted by phone/text with any necessary short-term or emergency information. It is critical that each student's registration form reflects updated contact information.

Because it is a studio environment, phone calls may not be answered immediately. Please leave us a voicemail and we'll assist you as quickly as possible.

Appointments

Teachers have a very short time between classes. Please call the office and make an appointment to speak with a teacher or the director if you have information to share or a concern.

Bulletin Board

Our bulletin board is located in the reception area. A hard copy of our Constant Contact Newsletters and additional information are posted on the board.

MDSB Parent Guild

The MDSB Parents Guild is open to all parents and supporters of the Mount Dora School of Ballet. The Guild was instituted in 2014 by parents to assist the school with performances, to help promote a positive environment for all students, parents, staff and teachers and to foster a healthy and communicative relationship between faculty and parents. The MDSB Parent Guild has a bulletin board located in the reception area.

We are most grateful to all of you, for sharing your time and talent in supporting the mission and goals of the Mount Dora School of Ballet.

Facebook and Instagram

Please join us on Facebook and Instagram. We post student news, interesting stories in the dance world, performance and classroom photos, ballet crafts for our younger dancers, etc. It is an informative Facebook and Instagram site so like us, then like the stories that you see, and then please share it with a friend. Don't miss out on the fun!

Contact Information

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