

# Mansfield Academy of Dance Handbook

## A Guide for Students and Parents

*As a condition of enrollment at the Mansfield Academy of Dance, students and their parents or guardians agree to abide by all the policies set forth by the Mansfield Academy of Dance, its director, faculty, and staff. Mansfield Academy of Dance 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) or guardian(s).*

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**

The Mansfield Academy of Dance 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 Mansfield Academy of Dance 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**

Since its beginning, 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 Mansfield Academy of Dance:**

12 Merrow Rd. Storrs-Mansfield, CT 06268  
860.477.0200  
themansfielddance@gmail.com  
www.mansfielddance.com

## **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 and students and their parents. Cooperation between all parents 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.

## **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.

## **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. 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**

Two to four times per year, parents may observe the last 10-15 minutes of their child's dance class. Please 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 Mansfield Academy of Dance. 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 professionals who are excited 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. Please let us know if you are not receiving our monthly newsletters and e-mail updates.

Newsletters and important updates are posted on our bulletin boards. The same newsletters and updates are emailed to you and posted on the Mansfield Academy of Dance's website and Facebook page.

If you have any questions regarding the information distributed, we encourage you to contact the office at 860.477.0200

We answer email on a daily basis, except on weekends. Feel free to email questions to the office at [themansfielddance@gmail.com](mailto:themansfielddance@gmail.com)

**Website [www.mansfieldacademyofdance.com](http://www.mansfieldacademyofdance.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 [www.facebook.com/Mansfieldacademyofdance](http://www.facebook.com/Mansfieldacademyofdance)**

"Like" the Mansfield Academy of Dance 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 [contact@mansfieldacademyofdance.com](mailto:contact@mansfieldacademyofdance.com).

## **Weather Cancellations**

School closures due to severe weather conditions will be announced by 2pm on that day for evening classes and at least 1 and ½ hours before morning and day classes. Notifications of weather cancellations will be posted on the website and the Facebook page, listed on local television and radio news stations, and announced on the school's outgoing voicemail message.

## **Dress Code Requirements**

Mansfield Academy of Dance 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.
- 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 recommended for students age 10 and older.

<b>Class</b>	<b>Boys</b>	<b>Girls</b>
Tiptoes for Two Year Olds	Comfortable clothes, Bare feet or leather ballet shoes (usually black)	Comfortable clothes. Bare feet or leather ballet shoes
FUN TO DANCE (Pre-K and Kindergarten)	Black sweatpants, white T-shirt, black ballet shoes and black slip on tap shoes.	Leotard, tights, pink leather ballet shoes, black tie tap shoes with elastic closure.
FUN TO DANCE (Combo 1 )	Black sweatpants, white T-shirt, black ballet shoes and black slip on tap shoes.	Leotard, tights, pink split sole leather ballet shoes, tan buckle tap shoes
Junior Dancers (Combo 2 and 3)	Black Dance Pants or black dance shorts, white t-shirt, black slip on tap shoes, black ballet slippers, black slip on jazz boots	Leotard, tights, optional black dance shorts for tap and jazz, tan buckle tap shoes, pink split sole ballet slippers, black slip on jazz boots.
Ballet Technique	Black dance pants (or tights for ages 10 and up), white T-shirt, black ballet shoes.	Dark colored leotard, pink tights, pink split sole ballet shoes. (Pink pointe shoes may be required.)
Jazz Technique	Black sweatpants, dance pants or tights, white T-shirt, black jazz shoes.	Leotard, black, pink or tan tights; optional black shorts or capri dance pants, tan slip on jazz shoes.
Tap Technique	Black sweatpants, white T-shirt, black tap shoes.	Leotard; black, pink or tan tights; Bloch "tap-on" shoes in tan
Hip-hop	Comfortable clothes (not jeans) and black dance sneakers.	Leotard, form fitting comfortable clothes (not jeans) and black dance sneakers.
Zumba	Comfortable clothes (not jeans) and clean sneakers	Comfortable clothes (not jeans) and clean sneakers

### **Discount Dancewear and Shoe Packages**

Mansfield Academy of Dance makes it easy for parents and students with "all you'll need" packages. A canvas bag with the "MAD" logo on it contains everything students need to begin their journey into the wonderful world of dance. Available only in September!

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

Mansfield Academy of Dance also offers dancewear and shoes for individual purchase at any time during the school year.

### **Registration Fee**

An annual registration fee of \$35 per student with a maximum of \$60 per family covers the cost of mailings, insurance, handbooks, rehearsals, 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.

## **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 class 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 Mansfield Academy of Dance to meet the child's needs

## **Arrival and Departure**

We encourage students to arrive 15 minutes before class starts. For their safety, children under age 10 should be picked up immediately after class by a parent coming into the studio. Students ages 10 and older must be picked up no more than 15 minutes after their class is completed unless the instructor has been notified in advance.

## **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 February through April, 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 and 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 observations and performances.

### **Makeup Classes**

Before February 1<sup>st</sup>, students who miss a class will have the opportunity to make it up with another similar class if one is available. After this time, it will be difficult to have make up classes as students are now involved in working on choreography specific to their group. 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

Please also refrain from bringing sick siblings into the studio. 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.

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. Emergency evacuation routes are posted in all classrooms and in the lobby. 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 students or 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 is commonplace. This policy is intended to provide Mansfield Academy of Dance students and parents with guidelines to eliminate any confusion concerning the use of social media.

- You DO NOT have permission to reveal any information that compromises Mansfield Academy of Dance and its faculty or students in any way. By that we mean you are forbidden to share personal information about the director, other students or their families, or anything that is proprietary and/or confidential to them or the school.
- Students and parents should neither claim nor imply that they are speaking on behalf of Mansfield Academy of Dance.
- Never post anything that could compromise the self-esteem of students who attend Mansfield Academy of Dance.
- If you post videos of class or rehearsals, don't post any choreography in its entirety; Mansfield Academy of Dance owns the copyright to all choreography taught at the school.
- Respect the law, including those laws governing defamation, discrimination, harassment, and 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.

## **General Policies**

- Parent and students should not enter the office space of the school without invitation from staff.
- Use of the school telephone is limited to emergencies only.
- Parents and students should never interrupt a class in session unless for an emergency.
- Only water is allowed in the studios. No food, drinks, or gum.
- We love babies and young children and appreciate the chance to meet our students' siblings. However, our priority is the safety of every child on the school premises. Children must be supervised at all times and are not free to run around the lobby or classroom areas.
- Please do not dispose of dirty diapers inside the school.
- No cell phones or computers may be used by students during class time. (This means no emailing, Internet use, or text messaging.)
- Students and parents are restricted from contacting teachers by phone, email, text messages, etc. All communication with teachers or the director must go through the Mansfield Academy of Dance office.
- Never speak negatively about teachers, students, or parents from other schools.
- Never recruit students from other schools.
- All students must show respect for their teachers at all times. Inappropriate behavior could result in dismissal from the school.

## **Annual Recital**

Photo Day: Tentatively Sunday June 2<sup>nd</sup>

Dress rehearsal: Tentatively Saturday June 8<sup>th</sup>

Recital: Tentatively Sunday June 9<sup>th</sup>

Dates will not be confirmed until February.

Additional rehearsals may be scheduled for students ages 10 and older at the discretion of the teacher/choreographer. Parents and students will be notified of additional rehearsals at least two weeks in advance.

**Please note that all students must participate in the dress rehearsal and photo day in order to perform in the recital. There are no exceptions to this policy.**

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. Preschool students perform one time in the annual recital. All other students perform one time in each of the styles of dance they are registered for.

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**

In January of each year 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. Preschool students will need one costume; all other students will need one costume for each dance form they train in. Costumes include all accessories (hats, gloves, , etc.) and tights for combo classes but do not include shoes.

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 during the December holiday break. Costume manufacturers do not accept cancellations or offer refunds.

Costume payments are now included in the dancer's tuition. Costumes will not be ordered unless the family's account balance is zero. Students are measured for costumes in the fall and we adjust those measurements based on the age of the dancer in order to leave room for growth. Students try on costumes with their teachers when they arrive in the spring to ensure a proper fit. Costumes will be handed out just before studio picture day.

### **Recital Photos**

Class photos will be taken in May or early June at the studio. Dates and times are subject to change. All students are required to be present for their class picture. There are no exceptions.

After the group photo shoot, students will 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.

## **ADDITIONAL INFORMATION AND ACTIVITIES**

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

“Bring-a-Friend Week” will be scheduled two times per year. Students may bring a friend (similar in age) to the school to experience a fun class designed for them and their guests. In April, students will also have the opportunity to perform their recital choreography for their friends. Students’ friends attend class free of charge during this week.

### **Summer Program and Camps**

Each summer, Mansfield Academy of Dance offers summer programs and camps for both current and new students. Summer activities are for children ages 2 through adults. A complete brochure of all summer programs will be distributed in early March. 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. Tables, chairs, sound systems, and microphones 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 afternoons or on Sundays; however, limited space is available during the week. Please contact the office for a complete brochure or visit our website for details.

### **A FINAL NOTE**

WELCOME TO Mansfield Academy of Dance! We look forward to an exciting, rewarding season! Please feel free to contact us with comments, questions or concerns at any time.



## MANSFIELD ACADEMY OF DANCE

STUDENT AND PARENT HANDBOOK ACKNOWLEDGMENT

(please sign and return at the beginning of each dance season)

I have reviewed and understand the  
Mansfield Academy of Dance student and parent handbook.

I understand the policies of the studio.

I understand that some dates and information may change  
and all changes will be posted in the studio, on the studio  
website and facebook, and sent in e-mail newsletters.

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Student Signature (10 and up)

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Parent Signature

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Date