

THE ACADEMY OF DANCE

PARENT & DANCER HANDBOOK

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ABOUT ACADEMY OF DANCE

The Academy of Dance (AOD), a highly acclaimed Orange County studio, was established in 1993 by Merle Sepel, and ownership taken over by Director Boróka Nagy and Máté Nagy in 2021. We offer professional, high-quality instruction in Classical Ballet Technique, Pointe, Variations, Modern, Contemporary, Repertoire, Hip Hop, Jazz, Tap, Pilates, Injury Prevention, Dynamic Conditioning, Voice, and Musical Theater. Our goal is to offer top-of-the line training as well as to instill a love of dance in our students and the community.

The AOD is staffed by internationally-trained, professional teachers who have been handpicked to offer high quality, safe, and careful training while nurturing and bringing out the best in each student. We offer classes to students who wish to dance recreationally, as well as those with a desire to pursue a career in dance or dance-related fields. Students have many opportunities to develop as artists by studying and participating in all aspects of theater and dance along with our performance opportunities.

All students are invited to participate in our annual Winter and June performances.

We at AOD strive to nurture a friendly and inviting atmosphere, and we welcome you as part of our dance family!

ACADEMY OF DANCE'S COMMITMENT

Our commitment at AOD is:

- To instill a love of dance in students.
- To produce the highest standard and quality of dance.
- To protect young students from the damage caused by poor teaching, and teach in an anatomically and emotionally safe way to each unique dancing body.
- To teach in a positive and nurturing environment.

WHY DANCE?

Dance helps create good posture and strong bodies. It is internationally accepted as a positive fundamental exercise for athletes to enhance performance at all levels. It develops coordination, control, musicality, and encourages self-expression and self-confidence, all while developing an appreciation for one of the great artistic disciplines. An accomplished dancer is often able to be accepted into colleges that are difficult to obtain entrance into otherwise.

Some students may become professional dancers and some may simply incorporate their dance experiences into an improved quality of life. However, all will be exposed to a variety of dance and musical forms that will enable them to become the enlightened audiences of tomorrow!

OUR MISSION

Our mission is to provide dance training that turns students not just into successful dancers, but accomplished human beings; prepared to achieve whatever they set their minds to. Through dance education, we instill creativity, healthy emotional release, community, trust, discipline, self-awareness, teamwork, compassion, and so much more. We believe in the power of dance, and we eagerly share our love and passion towards the artform with our students and their families.

GENERAL INFORMATION

STUDIO HOURS

The AOD opens approximately 20 minutes before the first scheduled class or rehearsal each day. If you need to reach AOD outside our normal business hours, please contact us by email at info@academyofdance.org or telephone (657) 232-0197.

PHONE NUMBERS AND EMERGENCY CONTACTS

Please provide updated email addresses, home and cell telephone numbers and home address information. In the event of an emergency, we must be able to reach a parent, guardian, or emergency contact. Please note that much of our communication regarding events and rehearsal schedules is done via email.

WAIVERS: MEDICAL, LIABILITY, AND PHOTO RELEASE

- Parents are required to fill out and submit medical treatment consent forms, authorizing AOD to obtain necessary medical treatment for your child in case of an emergency. It is also important for you to keep us informed of any medical condition, injury, or allergy your child has. In case of emergency, this information may be vital to your child's well-being.
- Parents are required to sign waivers of liability, releasing AOD from liability for any injuries that may be incurred by the student or while in the care of AOD.
- A Release for Use of child's name or likeness must be signed, granting permission to AOD to obtain, use, reproduce and publish or re-publish the name and/or likeness (photograph, digital, videotape, voice, electronic, or other likeness) of child, for commemorative, promotional, publicity, fundraising, commercial advertising, or any other purpose.

CONFERENCES AND MEETINGS

If you have questions or concerns about your child's dance education or related issues, please speak directly with the Director of the school (if requested, the teacher may be jointly included).

Please conduct all communication through the school office and the Director, rather than approaching your child's teacher or the Director between or during classes or calling them at home.

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 can offer expertise in the field of dance education.

Impromptu meetings between classes, no matter how short, delay the start of the next class.

LOST & FOUND

The AOD is not responsible for lost items or valuables. If you have lost a belonging, please check the dressing room and Lost & Found. Please note that the items stored in our Lost & Found are periodically donated to charity.

WHERE CAN I FIND INFORMATION OR LEAVE A MESSAGE?

MESSAGE BOOK

Sometimes, you will find that our entire staff is occupied with teaching students or helping members of our AOD family with other matters. For this reason, a message book is located at the reception desk. If you need to leave a message or question for AOD's Director, or any of the teachers, feel free to write it down in the message book. Our staff regularly checks the book and will contact you if necessary. You are welcome to send an email to the studio email address. Ms. Boróka and Mr. Máté check and respond to emails frequently.

BULLETIN BOARDS

To make sure you are informed of any news or changes, be sure to check the bulletin boards. All notices and schedules will be posted in these areas. It is the responsibility of every student and parent to regularly check the bulletin boards for important notices and schedule changes. If you still can't find what you're looking for, be sure to ask behind the desk: we're always happy to help!

EMAIL CORRESPONDENCE

Email is the most convenient way to send out rehearsal schedules, class updates and newsletters, and is the primary means of communication at AOD. Please verify that the email address we have on file for you is current and accurate, and add us to your contacts so you are not left out of any correspondence.

STUDIO ETIQUETTE AND DISCIPLINE

GENERAL INFORMATION AND RULES

- For the sake of safety, students may not enter a studio unless a teacher, Director, or studio owners are present and invite the students inside. The class props are not toys to be played with.
- Students are expected to arrive at least ten minutes before their class or rehearsal to warm up and prepare the body for dance class. Students are expected to be punctual and arrive in the correct uniform with hair secured. At the teacher's discretion, a student arriving late may be asked to observe class.
- Students must be polite and respectful to their teachers and to other students. Bad language and/or disrespectful behavior towards the instructor or other students will not be tolerated.
- Students may not talk during class unless to ask for information regarding the exercises.
- Students are expected to dress in their appropriate dress code for each class.
- Gum chewing, eating, or drinking (except water) is not permitted in any of the rooms of the studio or in the dressing room. Students and parents may feel free to enjoy their snacks in the reception and waiting areas. Please remember to pick up after yourselves when finished!
- Children who are not dancing may not run around the studio premises or disrupt classes. Likewise, parents and other visitors to the studio must ensure that siblings and friends are controlled, not writing on the walls, running through the hallways and dressing rooms of the studio, or disrupting classes.
- Observers are welcome at any time, but only in the reception/viewing area. All observers and visitors to the studio should use quiet voices in the studio. Loud conversations should be taken outside the building. AOD's staff reserves the right to ask anyone to leave the studio premises. Please silence your cell phones.
- Please refrain from disrupting the flow and success of the class in progress by tapping on the glass, correcting, talking to, or gesturing to students or teachers.

- The AOD is not responsible for students, siblings, or friends leaving the studio building without proper accompaniment.
- Please ensure that children are properly accompanied at all times, particularly in the parking lot area outside of the studio. Our studio is adjacent to a very busy parking lot. Parents, students, and family members should drive carefully and cautiously in the parking lot, and keep a watchful eye on children both inside and outside the studio.

PUNCTUALITY

Students must be on time for class. Students must be in their full uniform, with their hair done, and ready to dance at the scheduled start time of their class. It is disruptive to both the teacher and the other students for dancers to arrive late or unprepared. Latecomers must wait outside the door until invited in so as not to disrupt the class. If the dancer arrives very late, missing vital warm up time, the instructor may feel that participation in the class could be harmful to the dancer. Teachers shall reserve the right to refuse to allow a tardy dancer to participate in class. In such a case, there shall be no refund of the dancer's tuition for that class.

Studio etiquette is a valuable part of the dancer's training, and is something that applies from the youngest Tiny Tots all the way through to professional dancers.

DISCIPLINE

All students and parents are expected to demonstrate an appropriate demeanor while at the studio. Students and parents must be polite at all times. No loud talking, yelling, disturbing conversation, or disruptive behavior is allowed.

Dancers must respect each other and their studio environment. Parents are expected to hold their children to our high standards of courtesy and respect while at the studio and to help in maintaining an orderly and clean studio environment. Grace and courtesy are modeled for the students by the staff. Misbehavior by students will be redirected by our staff. All discipline problems will be reported to the Director of AOD, and parents will be notified of the problems. The Director shall have the final say as to what actions will be administered for such behavior.

The AOD recognizes that every child has the right to enjoy a life free from bullying; therefore, we will always take all allegations of bullying seriously and are committed to dealing with it effectively when it does happen. We will always endeavor to work with students and parents to prevent it from happening.

FOOD AT THE STUDIO

All students, parents, and visitors should respect the cleanliness of the studio by making sure all trash and crumbs are thrown away. A clean studio leads to a healthier environment and limits pests.

ROLE OF PARENTS

All parents want their children to do well, be it on the sports field, in the gymnasium, or in the dance studio. Just as importantly, parents want their children to enjoy what they are doing.

Parents must be willing to instill a sense of "commitment" in their dance student. Students and parents must understand that dances are choreographed to include all participating students. When students are frequently absent, miss necessary rehearsals, are tardy, are unprepared, or drop out of class or a scheduled production, their actions affect the other students in the class. In such cases, the dances must be re-choreographed, usually to the detriment of the students who have worked so hard. Students "partnered" with someone who is absent or who drops out are disadvantaged by the missing student's lack of commitment.

Parents must ensure that they bring their dancer to the appropriate class, wearing appropriate attire at the appropriate time. Encourage your child to try hard and enjoy themselves, trust the teachers to do the job that they have been trained to do.

AOD's faculty and staff are not responsible for the supervision of any dancer outside of their dance classes.

STUDENT AND PARENT USE OF SOCIAL MEDIA

Use of Instagram, Facebook, Twitter, Snapchat, TikTok, blogging, and other social media outlets today is the norm. This policy is intended to provide guidelines for the use of social media to AOD's parents and students.

- You do not have permission to reveal any information that compromises AOD. No sharing of any personal information about the Director, staff, students and/or their families.
- Students and parents should neither claim nor imply that they are speaking on behalf of AOD.
- Photo waivers have been signed by parents granting AOD the right to use photos. This right does not extend to other students or parents. Please do not post dance or other pictures without first checking with the Director.
- Do not take or share photos of students who are minors without their parents' expressed permission.
- If you wish to post videos of classes, rehearsals, or competition performances, the Director's permission must first be received.
- Do not post any choreography in its entirety. AOD owns the copyright to all choreography presented by the studio.
- Parents and students should never post negative comments about other students, studios, teachers, or events.

TUITION, CLASS SCHEDULES, AND ENROLLMENT

THE STUDIO YEAR, SCHEDULES, AND CALENDAR OF EVENTS

The AOD's studio year runs from late August through June. In addition, summer session classes are offered. An annual calendar of important dates and events will be posted on the studio bulletin board, on our website, and at the reception desk, and will be periodically revised as needed. Class schedules are also posted on the bulletin board and are available at the studio or on our website, www.academyofdance.org.

TUITION

Tuition serves the purpose of reserving your child's place in class on the basis of monthly periods. Current tuition rates are published and displayed at bulletin boards, at the reception desk, and on our website. Tuition rates are subject to change with a two week's notice.

Tuition is invoiced on the first of every month. Holidays and any other studio closures have been taken into account when determining the monthly fees, so each monthly payment will be equivalent so long as no changes occur in a dancer's total hours of classes per week. Tuition for the first and last month (August and June) will be billed during the first month of Fall classes. If any changes in schedule occur between August and June, the difference will be reconciled in June: billed, applied as credit, or refunded.

Tuition rates are determined by the number of hours of class a student is attending in a week. Each additional hour a week will lead to a discount in the hourly rate of tuition (see our bulletins and website for a price chart). Separate rates apply for private lessons, master classes, and specialty classes.

A registration fee of \$30.00 per student, or \$50.00 per family, is charged each year to cover the cost of enrollment processing and materials.

The AOD will send out tuition statements every month through an online class manager software. Tuition payments may be made through the online portal (manually or by enrolling in autopay), or in person. A \$10.00 late fee will be incurred for every week that a payment is late. If tuition is not received two weeks past the due date, the student will not be permitted to participate in their scheduled classes until payment has been received.

The AOD accepts online payments, cash, Visa, MasterCard, checks, money orders, and Venmo. Credit card payments require a \$20 minimum.

Case-by-case payment plans are available at the discretion of the Director. All returned checks (i.e. unsigned, insufficient funds, stop payment, account closed, etc.) will be charged a \$25.00 fee. Continued late payments and returned checks may cause your child to be withdrawn from their classes at the discretion of AOD. Dancers may also be prohibited, at the discretion of AOD's Director, from participating in classes, performances, examinations, or other events when their tuition account (including the balance on any unpaid fees) is past due.

All tuition and fees are nonrefundable. Tuition is not prorated for absences, vacations, or withdrawals, or for dismissals on the basis of discipline or tardiness. Only new students who begin class after the first lesson of the payment period will pay a prorated amount of tuition for that period. By enrolling your child in AOD, you agree to pay the full tuition due for any payment period in which your child attends class, as determined by the current applicable tuition rate. In addition, if you fail to provide the appropriate written notice prior to withdrawing your child from class, you will be liable for additional charges. Students may withdraw from a class with two weeks' written notice prior to the withdrawal date. Parents/guardians are responsible for tuition charges for the payment period following the withdrawal date if the two weeks' prior written notice of withdrawal is not provided to AOD.

Parents are legally responsible for all charges and fees on their dancer's account. Dancers may be prohibited, at the discretion of AOD's Director, from participating in classes, performances, examinations, or other events for unpaid charges and fees. Please refer to the "Withdrawing From a Class" section for dropping a class.

FEES FOR LATE PICK-UP

AOD's faculty and staff are not responsible for the supervision of any dancer outside of their dance classes. Parents must promptly pick up their dancer(s) from the studio after each class. It is the responsibility of each parent to ensure that their child is picked up on time. If your failure to pick up your child at the end of class results in an AOD faculty or staff member having to remain at the studio beyond the end of their scheduled shift, or causes the studio to have to remain open past the end time of the last scheduled class of the day, the dancer's parent is responsible for the payment of late pick-up fees.

The dancer's parent will be responsible for paying a fee of \$1.00 for every minute past the scheduled conclusion of class that the dancer is not picked up. Payments are made directly to the staff member who remains after closing time.

MAKE UP LESSONS

If a student is properly excused from their regular class lesson, the student will be permitted to make up the missed lesson by attending any other class on schedule in their level with prior written notice to Directors. A student will receive a make-up slip equivalent to the amount of missed hours. A student will only be allowed to make up the class if the studio is notified at least 1 hour prior to the start of class time that the dancer will be absent. "No Show" students are not guaranteed a make-up class. Students must pick up their make up slips from the front desk before the start of their make up class time.

Instructors need to be notified before class that it is being taken as a make-up class. The student's regular lesson time may not be used as a make-up lesson time. Students have 30 days after the missed lesson in which to attend a make-up lesson unless arrangements are made with the Director. Students may not "save" missed lessons and use them as credit for future payments.

TRIAL CLASSES

The AOD provides trial class vouchers for friends and family who wish to give dance a try! All trial class voucher holders must check in at the front desk. The instructor for the class will come and greet them before the lesson.

PRIVATE LESSONS AND PRIVATE LESSON CANCELLATIONS

Students may sign up for private lessons with any AOD faculty, based on availability. Private lesson fees are determined by and are paid directly to the faculty member providing the lesson, and are in addition to regular tuition payments. When a private lesson is scheduled, the time slot is held exclusively for that student. It is the responsibility of the student and parent to ensure that the dancer attends a scheduled private lesson and arrives on time. The scheduled lesson time will not be extended for a late-arriving dancer. Out of courtesy to the faculty and other dancers, we ask that you provide at least 24 hours of advance notice (by email or telephone) of any private lesson cancellation, as the reserved time slot may have been

taken by another student. Cancellations made with less than 24 hours' advance notice will incur a \$30.00 late cancellation fee.

CONFLICT OF INTEREST

The AOD discourages students from dancing at another dance studio while also dancing at AOD. Training philosophies differ and scheduling issues involving rehearsals occur. It is confusing to a young child to receive conflicting instruction. We would appreciate your regard for our faculty and students by respecting our policy.

WITHDRAWING FROM A CLASS OR FROM THE ACADEMY OF DANCE

Students may withdraw from a class or from enrollment at AOD with a two weeks' written notice prior to the withdrawal date. Parents/guardians are responsible for tuition charges for the payment period following the withdrawal date if two weeks' prior written notice of withdrawal is not provided to AOD. Until this has been received, your account will continue to incur charges.

RIGHT TO CANCEL

The AOD reserves the right to cancel any class with low enrollment. Different classes may be suggested as a replacement. If you are unable to attend the suggested class(es), you will receive a refund for any unused tuition. This applies only to classes that AOD may need to cancel.

STUDIO LIABILITY

The AOD and its faculty are not liable for personal injuries occurring during class time, rehearsals, dance conventions, competitions, or performances on or off the premises. Students and/or parents are individually responsible to inform the instructor or the studio of any physical limitations which may prevent full participation in studio activities.

PLACEMENT IN CLASSES

Placement in classes is based on age, skill, and previous training, and is subject to the instructor's approval. The Academy of Dance has created a curriculum for each dance style to place students according to various developmental landmarks in their dance training. The Director has the final decision with respect to any student's placement in a class. If you are unsure of what classes may be appropriate for your child, please speak to the Director for guidance with regard to the correct classes.

Please communicate concerns sooner rather than later by contacting the studio to make an appointment with the Director. Dance teachers are not to be interrupted before, during, or in between classes. Every effort will be made to address your concerns in a timely manner.

APPROPRIATE PHYSICAL CONTACT POLICY

Teaching dance is a physical activity and appropriate physical contact between students and teachers in class is essential to training. The AOD recognizes that such physical contact is a potentially complex area, and the company also fully recognizes its responsibilities for safeguarding students and teachers and for protecting their welfare.

The following principles and procedures are in place to fulfill our obligations:

- Contact by the teacher is made with a particular awareness of the needs of each individual to assist the dancer in correcting placement.
- All teachers will treat any physical contact with due sensitivity and care, and with due regard for the wishes of the student.
- Contact will not involve force or the use of any instrument.
- Teachers will be mindful of location and avoid situations where they are isolated with the student; private lessons should be held in studios and dance areas with windows or with the parent/carer present.
- Students and parents are encouraged to discuss any worries with any member of staff or an independent listener.
- Both students and teachers should feel free to report any concerns to the designated safeguarding lead, Máté Nagy.

COVID-19

The AOD will follow the guidelines and recommendations set in place by the CDC during the COVID-19 pandemic.

In the event of a forced studio closure by the CDC or local government, classes will continue at their normal day and time but move to an online (Zoom) platform. No refunds will be given.

STUDIO STORE

A small store is located at the studio reception area where you may purchase the regulation leotards, tights required for various classes, and children's ballet shoes. We also sell a limited selection of hairnets, other accessories, and snacks.

DECISIONS OF THE DIRECTOR OF THE ACADEMY OF DANCE

The Director of The AOD has the sole discretion and final decision in determining which dancers will be permitted to participate in IDA Awards, performances, workshops, performing groups, classes, competitions, and other events.

The AOD's Director reserves the right to dismiss anyone who does not comply with these rules or who disturbs the harmony and reputation of the studio in general. Negative or disparaging talk by anyone in the studio will not be tolerated. Students are expected to conduct themselves with integrity.

THANK YOU!

Thank you for reading our Handbook. You are now better informed of our policies and procedures. We hope that your experience at The AOD will be enjoyable and that you will continue to be part of our dance family for many years!