

ACADEMY OF DANCE

Parent & Dancer Handbook

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ABOUT ACADEMY OF DANCE

Academy of Dance (AOD), a highly acclaimed Orange County studio, was established in 1993 by Director Merle Sepel. We offer professional, high-quality instruction in Classical Ballet Technique, Pointe, Variations, Repertoire, Hip Hop, Jazz, Tap, Modern, Contemporary Fusion, Afro Contemporary, Dynamic Conditioning and Musical Theater. Our goal is to offer topnotch training as well as to instill a love of dance in our students and the community.

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 theatre and dance along with our performance opportunities.

A number of our students have jobs performing in professional dance companies; they have been accepted into dance major programs at Universities -many of them on scholarship- and they have been accepted to perform with visiting and international companies such as England's Royal Ballet of London, the American Ballet Theater, the Royal Danish Ballet, and the San Francisco Ballet. Many students have over the years been accepted to summer intensives at the American Academy of Ballet, American Ballet Theater, Boston Ballet, Houston Ballet, San Francisco Ballet, and the Universal Academy.

Our ballet students will be participating in the International Dance Acclaim (IDA) awards in February. This program uses the principles of artistic and technical progress through performance. This program along with the adjudicated performance is a valuable part of the training.

All students are invited to participate in our annual June performance, and all classical ballet dancers are encouraged to audition for our Nutcracker production every two years.

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.
- 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 exercises 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!

GENERAL INFORMATION

STUDIO HOURS

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 telephone 714-571-0443 or email at contact@academyofdance.org.

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 e-mail.

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 care of AOD.
- A Release for Use of child's name or likeness must be signed, granting permission to AOD, American Pacific Ballet Company and International Dance Acclaim 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 or assistant 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

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. Miss Merle checks 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 now a primary means of communication at AOD. Please verify 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 is present and invites 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 teacher 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.
- Gum chewing, eating, drinking (except water), or storing food is not permitted in any of the rooms of the studio or in the dressing room. There is a snack area at the far end of the studio (outside Studio A) where students and parents may feel free to enjoy their snacks. 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 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.
- 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 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.

FOOD AT THE STUDIO

To maintain a clean studio that is free from pests, students, parents, and visitors should refrain from eating or drinking (other than water) in any area other than the designated snack area outside Studio A. Please do not bring nut products or chocolate, as some of our students are highly allergic to these foods. Also, please respect the cleanliness of the studio by making sure all trash and crumbs are thrown away.

ROLE OF PARENTS

All parents want their children to do well, be it on the sports field, in the gymnasium, or in the ballet 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 teacher to do the job that he or she has 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 Facebook, Twitter, SnapChat, LinkedIn, blogging and other social media outlets today is the norm. This policy is intended to provide AOD's parents and students' guidelines for the use of social media.

- 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, APBC and IDA the right to use photos, not other students or parents. Please do not post dance or other pictures without first checking with the directors.
- Do not take or share photos of students who are minors without their parents express permission.
- If you wish to post videos of classes, rehearsals or competition performances, the director's permission must first be received.
- Don't 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 AND CALENDAR OF EVENTS

AOD's studio year runs from September 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.

SCHEDULES

Class schedules are posted on the bulletin board and are available at the studio, or you will find them on our website, www.academyofdance.org.

TUITION

Tuition serves the purpose of reserving your child's place in class on a monthly basis. Current tuition rates are published and displayed on the back of all schedules and at the reception desk, and are subject to change upon 10 days' notice from AOD.

Monthly tuition is the same in each month, regardless of the number of weeks or holidays in a month, or whether the month is a "short" month for classes (such as December). AOD determines its tuition rate by taking into consideration the total number of times a class meets between September and June, setting the total fee for this entire 10-month period of class meetings, and dividing the total fee into ten monthly tuition installments. Therefore, the tuition charge remains the same every month, as tuition rates are averaged out on a yearly basis, not a monthly basis.

Tuition rates are determined by the number of hours per week the student is attending class. In addition, special multi-package tuition rates are available for students taking 6-10 hours of class per week or 11-14 hours per week. An "unlimited" tuition package is also available for students taking 15 or more hours of classes per week. Separate rates apply for private lessons, master classes, and specialty classes. **If a student is not enrolled on a multi-package basis, then first and last month's tuition must be paid at the time of class registration.**

A registration fee of \$30.00 is charged to all students each year to cover the cost of enrollment processing and materials. Should a student withdraw or otherwise discontinue taking classes at AOD for more than one month, a new \$30.00 registration fee will be assessed upon reenrollment.

AOD does not send out monthly tuition statements. It is your responsibility to pay monthly installments of tuition ON or BEFORE the first of the month for the coming month. Tuition payments may be made in person, via mail, or placed in the locked tuition box (located across from Studio B, next to the changing room). **All tuition payments made after the eighth of the month will be assessed a \$10.00 late fee.** After 30 days, an additional 1.5% interest monthly (18% annually) may be charged on the unpaid balance.

AOD accepts cash, Visa, MasterCard, checks, and money orders. To keep the cost of tuition down we would appreciate all credit card transactions being made in person. At registration time a credit card must be placed on file.

To those who are accustomed to automatic charges, we are happy to continue with this service, however a 3% service charge would be added to your bill towards covering the fee charged to us by the merchant company.

Alternatively you may opt to pay in person and have your credit card swiped. No additional fee will be charged if card is swiped.

If tuition has not been paid by the 15th of the month, your credit card will be charged and will include a **\$10 late fee plus a 4% transaction fee** (fee as charged by the credit card company).

Visa or MasterCard gladly accepted on transactions of \$20 or more.

Payment plans are also available. 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 his or her 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 month will pay a prorated amount of tuition for the first month only. By enrolling your child in AOD, you agree to pay the full tuition due for any month 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 upon 30 days written notice prior to the withdrawal date. Parents/guardians are responsible for tuition charges for the month following the withdrawal date if 30 days prior written notice of withdrawal is not provided to AOD.

AOD reserves the right to add unpaid fees for registration, late tuition payments, costumes, late child pick-up, returned checks, private lesson no-shows, unpaid merchandise and any other unpaid fees or charges to the dancer's account. Parents are legally responsible for all fees and charges that post to the dancer's account. Dancers may be prohibited, at the discretion of AOD's Director, from participating in classes, performances, examinations, or other events when charges or fees that post to their account remain unpaid.

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 his or her 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. For example, if the dancer is not picked up until 10 minutes after the end of the day/shift, then the parent must pay a fee of \$10.00 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. 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 AOD's Director. Students may not "save" missed lessons and use them as credit to future months' lessons or payments.

PRIVATE LESSONS AND PRIVATE LESSON CANCELLATIONS

Students may sign up for private lessons based on availability. Rates for private lessons are set and listed on the current rates and schedule document, and are charged in addition to regular tuition payments. Please note that **all private lessons must be scheduled through AOD**, regardless of which instructor is giving the private lesson. 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. Moreover, the dancer must arrive on time. The scheduled lesson time will not be extended for a late-arriving dancer. **If a dancer fails to attend his/her scheduled private lesson without 24 hours advance notice of cancellation, the dancer's account will still be fully charged for the lesson**, since the time slot was held exclusively for the dancer. The amount will post to the dancer's account and shall not serve as a credit for future lessons or tuition.

Telephone or written notice, at least 24 hours in advance of the scheduled private lesson, is **required** to cancel a private lesson without the dancer's account being charged. Acceptable telephone notice consists of calling the studio and either speaking with an AOD staff member or leaving a message on the answering machine. Acceptable written notice consists of writing the dancer's name, date, time, and reason for cancellation in the studio message book at the counter.

CONFLICT OF INTEREST

The policy of AOD discourages our students dancing simultaneously at another dance studio while dancing at AOD. Training philosophy's 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 ACADEMY OF DANCE

Students may withdraw from a class or from enrollment at AOD upon **30 days written notice prior** to the withdrawal date.

Parents/guardians are responsible for tuition charges for the month following the withdrawal date if 30 days 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

AOD reserves the right to cancel any class with low enrollment. A different class may be suggested. 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

AOD and its instructors 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. AOD's Director has the final decision with respect to any student's placement in a class. If you are unsure 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.

UNIFORM REQUIREMENTS

Following are brief descriptions and dress codes for our classes:

All students must adhere to AOD's dress code. **NO EXCEPTIONS.** Students must wear the listed uniforms required for each class.

- **Hair:** For girls, hair must be up the required hairstyle for each class. For boys, or for girls with very short hair, the dancer's hair must be neatly groomed for each class. Messy hair over the face and eyes are a distraction.
- **Outerwear:** No t-shirts, sweatpants, shorts, or any baggy outerwear that would obstruct a teacher's view of the dancer may be worn to class.
- **Jewelry:** No jewelry, including earrings, necklaces, bracelets, watches or body jewelry, may be worn to class. Small earrings for pierced ears are permitted.
- **Grooming:** Dancers should be clean and neatly groomed. Please do not wear dirty or broken tights. No visible body tattoos or writing on the skin is permitted in class.
- **Gum:** No gum chewing or other eating is allowed during class.

DRESS CODE

BALLET

All ballet classes:

- **Leotards:** Dancers in Enchanted Doorway, Pre Primary, Primary, Sapphires, Rubies and Emeralds classes must wear the regulation Prima Soft leotard in the assigned color of their class. Leotards are available at the studio store.
- **Leg Warmers:** Leg warmers may only be worn to class in cold circumstances.
- **Tights:** Ballet tights must be clean and in good repair. Mondor convertible tights, color 7-, are the required tights for all performances and presentations. Mondor tights are available at the studio store.
- **Shoes:** Dancers from Tiny-Tots through Intermediate Foundation must wear leather, full sole ballet shoes for each class. Intermediate and up may wear canvas or leather in open class. Smaller size shoes are available at the studio store.
- **Hair:** For girls, hair must be up in a tidy bun for each class. For boys, or for girls with very short hair, the dancer's hair must be neatly groomed for class.
- **Boys:** For all ballet classes boys must wear black or white ballet shoes. Boys should wear black or white fitted shirts or tank tops. Tiny-Tots through Primary may wear black or white shorts. From Sapphires and up, boys should wear black or white tights and a dance belt.

ADDITIONAL UNIFORM REQUIREMENTS

TINY TOTS, COMBO:

Girls:

- Solid pink leotard
- Pink skirt
- Black tap shoes (Combo only)

Boys:

- Black tap shoes (Combo only)

ENCHANTED DOORWAY, PRE PRIMARY AND PRIMARY:

Girls:

- Primasoft , solid pink leotard with attached skirt. (available at the studio store)

SAPPHIRES , RUBIES, EMERALDS, PRE VOCATION:

Girls:

- Powder blue leotard, Primasoft style 506 or 502 **Sapphires**
- Burgundy leotard, Primasoft style 506 or 502 **Rubies**
- Forest Green Leotard, Primasoft style 506 or 502 **Emeralds**
- Solid Black leotard – plain cami or tank (NO straps across back) **Pre Vocational**

INTERMEDIATE FOUNDATION:

Girls:

- Solid Black leotard - cami, tank or sleeves (NO straps across back)
- Pointe Shoes (where permission has been given)
- Demi-pointe shoes (for Pre Pointe Class)

OPEN CLASS , POINTE, REPERTOIRE:

Girls:

- Any solid color leotard

MODERN, JAZZ, TAP, CONTEMPORARY FUSION, AFRO CONTEMPORARY, MUSICAL THEATER:

- Leotard
- Tights or tight fitting leggings (or shorts for Afro)
- Jazz Shoes (Jazz, Musical Theater, Contemporary Fusion)
- Black tap shoes (Tap)
- Bare feet or foot undies (Modern, Afro Contemporary)
- No t-shirts or cover ups
- Hair must be tied back

HIP HOP :

- Leotard or snug-fitting top
- Jazz or dance pants
- Jazz shoes or tennis shoes.
- No t-shirts or cover ups
- Hair must be tied back

STUDIO STORE

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

DECISIONS OF THE DIRECTOR OF THE ACADEMY OF DANCE

The Director of 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.

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!