

## **Welcome to Dance Artistry Center!**

It's our absolute pleasure to warmly welcome you into our family at Dance Artistry Center. Our team is thrilled to see many familiar faces return to the studio and even more excited to see some new faces join our community. This handbook will serve as your guide to Dance Artistry Center and its philosophy of dance education. We take our roles as 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**

Dance Artistry Center 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 Dance Artistry Center 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**

FOR MORE THAN 14 years 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 Dance Artistry Center:**

501 Glen Echo Ave. Woolwich, NJ 08085

856-241-1736

[sarabittle@danceartistrycenter.com](mailto:sarabittle@danceartistrycenter.com)

[www.danceartistrycenter.com](http://www.danceartistrycenter.com)

[www.facebook.com/danceartistrycenter](https://www.facebook.com/danceartistrycenter)

## **Key event dates for Dance Artistry Center:**

Classes begin week of Monday, 9/09/24

Nutcracker Remixed, Tentatively December 13-15, 2024

15th Annual June Showcase, Tentatively Sunday, June 15, 2025

## **Dance Artistry Center Closure Dates 2024-2025:**

October 31st - Halloween

November 3-10th - Fall Break

November 27- 30th - Thanksgiving Break

December 22- January 4th - Winter Break

February 14-17th - Presidents' Weekend

April 15-21st - Spring Break

May 23-26th - Memorial Day Weekend

June 14 - Last Day of Classes

## **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 your 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 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.

## **Special Information for Parents of Preschool-Aged Students**

Our purpose is to provide the highest-quality preschool education in a secure, nurturing, and stimulating environment. Dance Artistry Center serves the physical, emotional, and intellectual needs of the preschool students. We meet these goals with our age-appropriate curriculum and ongoing communication with parents. The first few weeks of classes serve as an introductory phase to help students become comfortable with the overall dance experience, the classroom, their teacher, and their classmates.

Right from the beginning we focus on your child's coordination, listening skills, musical awareness, and developing imagination. We accomplish this through age-appropriate music and song, simple stretching exercises, ballet basics, and games in an environment of creativity. Some preschool students will incorporate simple tap-dance movement. Preschool dance is about helping children learn to tap into their imaginations and express themselves creatively, not necessarily about learning steps (although they do get introduced to some basic steps). So don't be disappointed if your child doesn't pirouette around the house or look like a budding ballerina right away.

## **Separation From the Parent**

The process of separating from the parent as the child attends dance class is an important accomplishment of preschool children. As children mature, they begin to identify themselves as independent personalities. In separating from you, the parent, your child is learning

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

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

- Emphasize what the child is doing at the dance class rather than what you do while he/she is in class.
- Before you leave, see that the child is involved in an activity or is in the hands of a teacher.
- Avoid prolonged good-byes.

- Ask the teacher for help in separation. We expect the crying (and usually the tears are for the parent's benefit).

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

If your child cries or does not want to take class, don't panic. If we push children and create more stress than they are already experiencing, they may come to perceive dance class as a bad experience. That kind of negativity could make them apprehensive about dance for a long time, which isn't good for anyone involved. Never force your child into the classroom. We encourage you to have your child try again next year. We recommend that children be encouraged to practice at home but not forced to do so. Repetition is one of the key elements for success with preschool dance students; the more they practice, the more confident they will feel. Practicing with your child allows you to join in the dance experience.

## **FOR ALL PARENTS AND STUDENTS**

### **Understanding Dance Education**

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

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

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

### **Class Placement**

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

many years of teaching experience. Often a child is placed in a particular group or class where he or she will feel confident, in order to promote the development of self-esteem. Some students who are placed in a higher level become discouraged, only to lose their passion for dance. Others respond to the challenge of being in a class with students who are more proficient by pushing themselves to work harder. Placement is highly individual and the factors that go into the decision are complex.

## **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 Dance Artistry Center. 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 anxious to work with all children and personalities, and the more we know about your child, the better the dance experience will be for all involved. All information about our students is confidential.

## **Dos and Don'ts**

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

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

Children learn important lessons from their teachers and parents, acquiring behavior patterns through their example. Our school's faculty takes that responsibility seriously. It's our philosophy to encourage our students to feel, think, and act respectfully toward their peers, the adults in their lives, and themselves.

If you have questions or concerns about your child's dance education (such as progress or class placement), please discuss them with your child's teacher or the director. Talking only to other parents can lead to misinformation and confusion. Please contact the school office to set up an appointment; do not approach your child's teacher or the director between or during classes or make contact outside of the school.

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

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

## **STAYING INFORMED**

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

Newsletters and important updates are emailed to you and posted on our bulletin boards and on the Dance Artistry Center Facebook/Instagram page. We answer email daily, except on weekends. Feel free to email questions to the office at [info@danceartistrycenter.com](mailto:info@danceartistrycenter.com) or [sarabittle@danceartistrycenter.com](mailto:sarabittle@danceartistrycenter.com).

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

## **Band App**

DAC has the Band App with groups set up for General Updates/Weather Cancellations, The Nutcracker Remixed Updates, and Competition Team Updates.

To join, follow the link to the group/s that fit your needs:

DAC General Updates/Weather Cancellations:



Nutcracker Reminders:



Competition Team: Contact Miss Taylor for the link.

## **Facebook Page [[www.facebook.com/danceartistrycenter](http://www.facebook.com/danceartistrycenter)]**

“Like” the Dance Artistry Center page on Facebook to receive 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 [sarabittle@danceartistrycenter.com](mailto:sarabittle@danceartistrycenter.com).

## **Instagram Page [[@danceartistrycenter](https://www.instagram.com/danceartistrycenter)]**

### **Weather Cancellations**

School closures due to severe weather conditions will be announced by 2:00pm on that day. If the Swedesboro-Woolwich School District is closed due to weather conditions, DAC will also be closed. Notifications of weather cancellations will be emailed, posted in the Parent Portal, posted on the Facebook page, and Instagram [@danceartistrycenter](https://www.instagram.com/danceartistrycenter)

### **Dress Code Requirements**

Dance Artistry Center 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. Dance floors need to be kept clean, as many dance classes include work on the floor.
- Female students should wear their hair tightly secured and styled away from the face; a neat bun is required for ballet classes.
- Students are expected to observe good personal hygiene habits. Deodorant is recommended for dancers ages 10+.

**Pre-Ballet 1 & 2 and Ballet 1, 2, & 1/2** dancers may wear any color leotard with or without a skirt attached. Pink leather ballet shoes (no drawstring is preferred) and pink tights or bare legs for class.

**Pre-Ballet/Tap Combo** dancers may wear any color leotard with or without a skirt attached. Pink leather ballet shoes (no drawstring preferred), black patent leather tap shoes (Velcro closure preferred) and pink tights or bare legs for class.

**All Hip-Hop Levels** may wear street clothes (no jeans) and any plain black sneaker that is only worn for class. Please do not wear your dance shoes outside!

**Ballet 3 & 4** Any color leotard with or without a skirt, pink tights, pink canvas split-sole ballet shoes and hair in a bun.

**All Jazz Levels** may wear leotard and tan tights with tan jazz shoes. Dancers may also wear fitted dance clothes (leggings, dance shorts, etc).

**All Contemporary Levels** may wear leotard and tan stirrup tights with tan half-sole shoes. Fitted dance clothes are also allowed (leggings, dance shorts, etc).

**All Company Division Ballet Levels** Any color leotard with or without a skirt, pink tights, pink canvas split-sole ballet shoes and hair in a bun.

**Tap 1** dancers may wear leotard and tan tights with black, mary-jane style tap shoes. Fitted dance clothes are also allowed (leggings, dance shorts, etc.)

**Tap 2 & 3** dancers may wear leotard and tan tights with black, lace-up tap shoes. Fitted dance clothes are also allowed.

Items can be purchased from our online Store through this link: **[DAC Online Store](#)**

Acro students may wear a leotard or fitted clothing and bare feet. Students going to dance class immediately following or before acro should be sure to wear convertible tights so they can be rolled up.

## **Registration Fee**

An annual registration fee of \$25 per student, \$20 per additional sibling, covers admin costs, insurance, and holds your place in the class. Registration fees are not refundable.



## Tuition Investment

Tuition is a yearly fee divided into 10 equal installments (September-June). There are no adjustments for months with holidays or in months with 5 weeks. Tuition cannot be prorated due to absence, students are expected to make up any missed class.

- Tuition is due on the 1st of the month and is considered late after the 10th of each month. A \$15.00 late fee will be charged. Any student with tuition fees outstanding for more than 2 weeks will not be allowed to continue classes until fees are paid.

- Family Discounts: Offered to families with more than one student enrolled. A 15% discount is offered for the second student who is registered for the lesser number of hours. A 20% discount for each additional sibling after that.

- Costumes - Classes participating in the June Showcase will be charged for 1 costume for each style class. Costumes are \$80 for per costume and will be broken down into 2-4 payments, depending on the number of costumes per dancer.

- June Showcase Performance Fee - \$75 per student due April 15th, includes a \$40 ticket credit, a cast t-shirt, and a Digital Download of the show. Additional Siblings will be \$25, for their cast t-shirt.

- Credit cards are accepted for tuition payments through your Parent Portal: <https://dancestudio-pro.com/online/danceartistrycenter>

- A \$30.00 service/bank fee will be charged for any returned check.

- Tuition Refund Policy: Within 15 days of your first class, if you are not satisfied with the quality of training provided by Dance Artistry Center, you may withdraw from the class and a refund will be provided for all classes not taken.

Class Hours Per Week	Cost Per Installment (10 installments, Sept-June)
0.50	\$57.00
0.75	\$68.00
1.00	\$77.00
1.25	\$89.00
1.50	\$95.00
1.75	\$107.00

Class Hours Per Week	Cost Per Installment (10 installments, Sept-June)
2.00	\$119.00
2.25	\$126.00
2.50	\$140.00
2.75	\$151.00
3.00	\$162.00
3.25	\$169.00
3.50	\$172.00
3.75	\$179.00
4.00	\$183.00
4.25	\$185.00
4.50	\$190.00
4.75	\$195.00
5.00	\$203.00
5.25	\$205.00
5.50	\$207.00
5.75	\$212.00
6.00	\$215.00
6.25	\$220.00
6.50	\$225.00
6.75	\$230.00
7.00	\$235.00
7.25	\$237.00
7.50	\$239.00
7.75	\$243.00
8.00	\$245.00
8.25	\$249.00
8.50	\$254.00

Class Hours Per Week	Cost Per Installment (10 installments, Sept-June)
8.75	\$259.00
9.00	264.00
9.25	\$269.00
9.50	\$274.00
9.75	\$279.00
10	\$287.00

## 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 Dance Artistry Center to meet the child's need

## **Arrival and Departure**

We encourage students to arrive 5 minutes before class starts. For their safety, children should be picked up immediately after class. Dance Artistry Center is not responsible for students outside of class time.

## **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 May, choreography for the recital will be taught and rehearsed. It is important for children to feel completely confident with the choreography and the year-end performance. Missing class during this period could result in frustration for the students and their teachers and classmates.

## **Makeup Classes**

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

## **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.

## **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. Our lost and found is located on the front lobby coat rack next to the door.

## 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:

**\*\*Please follow the current Covid Protocols set forth by the Swedesboro-Woolwich School District.**

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

If these symptoms or other conditions deemed contagious are observed in your child during a class, you will be called to pick up your child immediately.

When your child has a fever, please keep him/her at home until the temperature returns to normal for 24 hours. If there are any lingering signs of illness, such as glassy or watery eyes, listlessness, and drowsiness, please keep your child at home. This will help to ensure that the illness has passed and that your child will be well enough to resume class activities the following week.

## Emergency Evacuation

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

## Parking Lot Safety

The school is home to children of all ages. Please enter and exit our parking lot slowly with **extreme caution**. Please note that our parking lot is **one-way**, with the entrance on the Glen Echo Ave side and the exit on the Lake Ave side. Never park your vehicle in any area that is not a designated parking space (extra parking is available on the left-hand side of the building in the stone section. Please do not block the entrance to additional parking). Please do not allow siblings or dancers to play in the parking lot.

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

Use of Facebook, Twitter, LinkedIn, blogging, and other online social-media vehicles is commonplace. This policy is intended to provide Dance Artistry Center 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 Dance Artistry Center. 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 Dance Artistry Center.
- Students and parents should neither claim nor imply that they are speaking on behalf of Dance Artistry Center.
- Never post anything that could compromise the self-esteem of students who attend Dance Artistry Center.
- If you post videos of class or rehearsals, don't post any choreography in its entirety; Dance Artistry Center 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.

## **General Policies**

- Parent and students should not enter the office space of the school without permission.
- Parents and students should not interrupt a class in session.
- 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.)
- Never speak negatively about teachers, students, or parents from other schools.
- All students must show respect for their teachers at all times. Inappropriate behavior could result in dismissal from the school.

## **Annual June Showcase**

Showcase: Tentatively the weekend of June 13-15<sup>th</sup>, 2025

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.

All dance (not Acro) students participate in our annual Showcase. The Showcase 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. All 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.

## **Costumes**

We spend many hours determining the correct costumes for each class. They are always age appropriate and of the highest quality possible. Students will need one costume for each dance form they train in. Costumes include all accessories (hats, gloves, etc.), but do not include shoes or tights.

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

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

### **Recital Tickets**

Tickets for the annual recital will go on sale at Dance Artistry Center in May. The performance is reserved seating.

### **A FINAL NOTE**

Welcome to Dance Artistry Center! We look forward to an exciting, rewarding season!