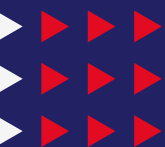
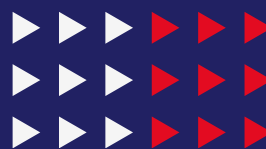




BALLET ETUDES

SINCE 1986



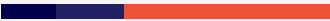
2025/2026

Ballet Etudes Academy

HANDBOOK



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WELCOME



Sharon Seder Meko
Founding Director

Welcome to the Ballet Etudes Academy Handbook, your ultimate guide to an exciting year of dance, music, and performance! We've put together this comprehensive resource to provide you with clarity and address any questions you may have as we embark on this incredible journey together. While we encourage you to read this information carefully and keep it in a safe place for future reference, remember that our friendly office volunteers are always here to support you.

At Ballet Etudes Academy, we are driven by a shared vision, purpose, and philosophy that permeates everything we do. Our studio is a place where students of all ages come to discover the joy of dance. We foster an environment that celebrates creativity, individuality, and self-expression, forming a vibrant community of teachers, students, and families who are passionate about the performing arts. Our ultimate goal is to create a positive and joyful experience for each and every student. We strive to nurture and develop their talents, celebrate their achievements, and inspire a deep love and appreciation for all styles of dance and the arts. Most importantly, we are committed to providing a safe and empowering space where every student can freely express themselves.

As mentors and teachers in your child's life, we take our roles seriously. Our objective is to ignite a lifelong passion for dance within each child who walks through our doors. Along the way, we aim to lead by example and help your child (and you) create cherished memories that will last a lifetime.

A handwritten signature in white ink, likely belonging to Sharon Seder Meko, set against a dark blue background with a red curved shape at the bottom.

KEY INFORMATION



Key Contact Information

Mailing Address: 1455 S Stapley Drive in Mesa
Telephone Number: (480) 558-2080
Tuition/Payment: office@balletetudes.net
Showcase/Lower Levels: admin@balletetudes.net
General Information: info@balletetudes.net
Website: balletetudes.net

Key Event Dates

Sept 1 Studio Closed: Labor Day
Oct 6-11 Studio Closed: Fall Break
Nov 26-29 Studio Closed: Thanksgiving
Dec 21-Jan. 4 Studio Closed: Winter Break
Jan 5 First Day of Spring Classes
Jan 19 Studio Closed: Martin Luther King Jr. Day
Feb 16 Studio Closed: Presidents' Day
Mar 16-21 Studio Closed: Spring Break
May 23 Last Day of Spring Classes
May 30 Showcase (Rehearsal and Performance)

Social Media

Instagram @balletetudes
Facebook @balletetudesaz
YouTube @balletetudes
TikTok @balletetudes

WE ARE A 501(C)3



Ballet Etudes is a non-profit 501(c)3 organization; there is no owner, but instead we are governed by an appointed Board of Directors. While other studios in the Valley have owners who reap profits, our studio has no such owner, but rather a supportive group of parents and friends who ask for nothing in return and believe in the mission of our studio and company.

OUR STORY



In 1986, families of Sharon Seder Meko's ballet students were so inspired by the growth and progress they saw in their children that they approached her with a request: opportunities to perform. Sharon responded by organizing community performances throughout the Phoenix Valley, and before long, the idea of forming a company took root. Ballet Etudes—named after the French term meaning “the study of ballet”—was born, becoming the first company of its kind in the area. Sharon's husband, Bob Meko, gathered a dedicated group of parents to establish a board of

directors and lay the foundation for a strong support network of parents and volunteers.

Thanks to the vision of Sharon and Bob Meko, the commitment of our families, and the talent of our dancers, Ballet Etudes has continued to thrive—upholding a proud legacy of excellence in training and performance.

April 17, 1986

Dear Supporter of Ballet,

The ballet company, Ballet Etudes, is holding an informational and organizational meeting for all interested persons on Friday, April 25, at 7:00 P.M. We will be meeting at the law office of J. Lamar Shelley at 48 North MacDonald Street, in Mesa.

The company is presently comprised of dances from Jeanne's School of Dance. The purpose of this meeting is to:

1. Discuss the scope of the company
2. form an organizational structure
3. elect a board of directors.

Your attendance at this meeting does not necessitate your holding an office. Only, your input is desired.

Please plan on attending this important meeting. Your opinions/participation is valued.

Sincerely,

G. Robert Meko

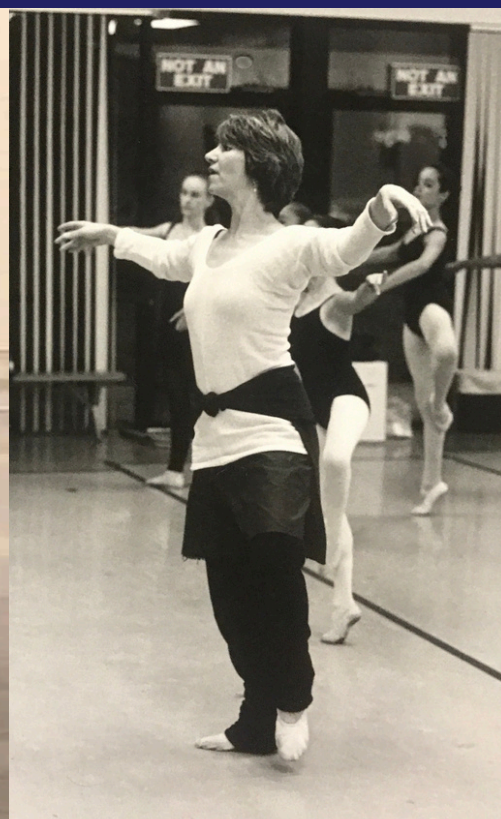
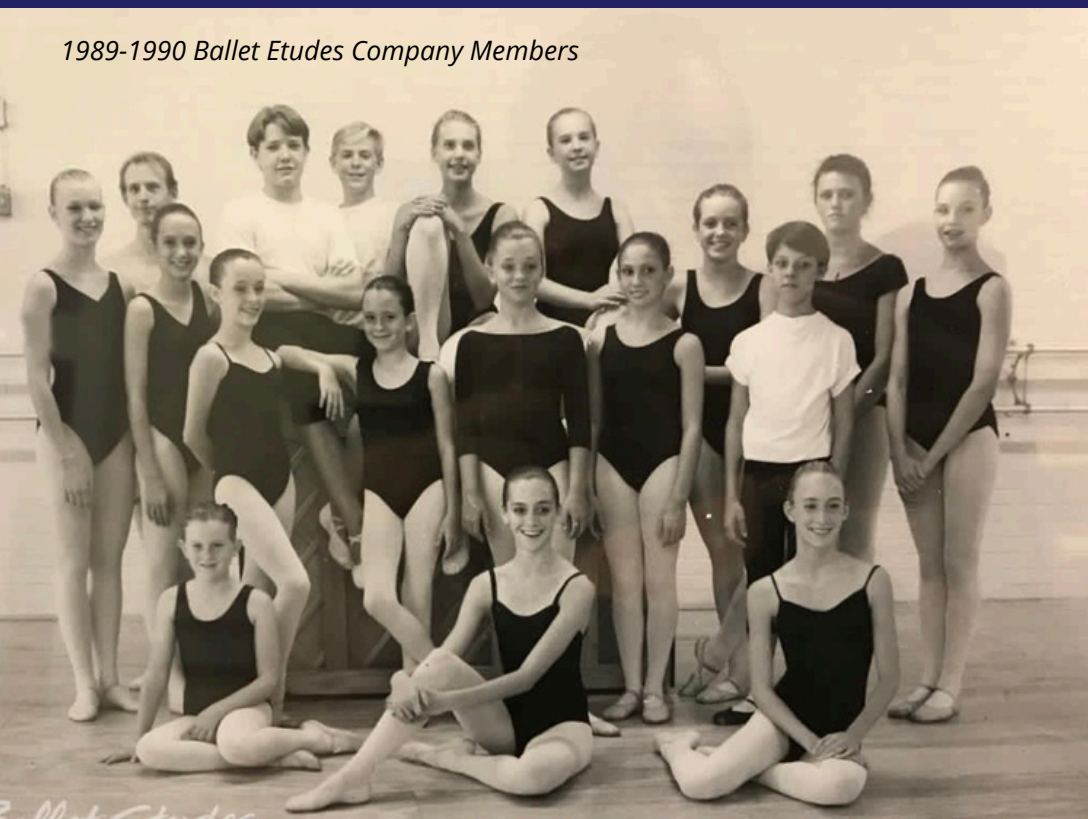
BALLET ETUDES



Ballet Etudes Academy is the home of Ballet Etudes, the Phoenix Valley's first pre-professional performing group, founded in 1986 by Sharon Seder Meko. The company, for auditioned dancers ages 10-18, offers an array of performing opportunities showcasing the excellence in training our students receive. From enchanting classical full-length ballets like *The Sleeping Beauty* and *The Nutcracker* to innovative contemporary pieces, each performance is a testament to the dancers' dedication and skill. These opportunities not only allow the dancers to refine their technique but also to gain precious performing experience in a non-competitive setting.

Parent Volunteers serve in many capacities from front desk, to chaperones, to seamstresses, etc. We thank you all for your support and kindness in making Ballet Etudes a welcoming and thriving environment for all!

1989-1990 Ballet Etudes Company Members



BALLET ETUDES ACADEMY



After more than 20 years of operating out of a local dance studio, Ballet Etudes opened its first dedicated home in 2010. In January 2023, the company celebrated a new chapter with the grand opening of its current facility on Stapley Drive.

Ballet Etudes Academy is dedicated to providing high-quality dance classes that contribute to the development of your child. Our safe and child-centered environment encourages students to explore the art of dance under the guidance of nurturing teachers. We firmly believe that dance training fosters a positive self-image, heightens body awareness, enhances coordination skills, and allows children to express themselves through movement.



OUR STUDENTS



You are taking the first step towards becoming a dancer by making a solid commitment to your classes. Remember, class time is your opportunity to focus on yourself and improve your technique. Come prepared, leave distractions behind, and embrace each class as a chance to become even better at what you love. Dance full-out, stretch a little further, and make the most of every moment. With dedication and enthusiasm, you'll see incredible progress.

Respecting your teachers is key. Embrace every correction given, as it shows how much your teachers care about your growth. Your commitment and appreciation for your teachers' knowledge and experience will propel you towards greatness. Nothing can stop those who apply themselves and value their teachers' guidance.

OUR PARENTS



We believe that your support plays a crucial role in your child's dance education. Your commitment to the process makes an enormous difference, and we encourage you to actively participate in your child's dance journey. Our programs thrive in a positive atmosphere that involves the cooperation and respect of all parents. By showing respect for one another, our students, and our faculty, you become role models for your children, demonstrating how to interact professionally and compassionately with others.

Your child's consistent attendance at all classes is imperative. Together, we foster a spirit of teamwork and dedication that forms an essential part of our educational process. While parents and teachers may have different perspectives, we share a common goal: ensuring that every child receives the best possible training, physically and mentally. By fostering mutual respect among our faculty and parents, we create an environment that nurtures our students with care and the highest quality education.



SPECIAL INFORMATION FOR PARENTS OF PRE SCHOOL STUDENTS



We are dedicated to providing the highest-quality preschool education in a secure, nurturing, and stimulating environment. Our age-appropriate curriculum and ongoing communication with parents address the physical, emotional, and intellectual needs of our preschool students.

During the first few weeks of classes, we focus on helping students become comfortable with the dance experience, their classroom, teacher, and classmates. Through age-appropriate music, stretching exercises, ballet basics, and creative games, we foster coordination, listening skills, musical awareness, and imagination. Remember, preschool dance is about helping children tap into their imaginations and express themselves creatively, rather than solely learning steps. So don't worry if your child doesn't pirouette around the house right away—it's all part of their dance journey.

The process of separating from parents is an important milestone for preschool children attending dance class. As children grow, they learn to develop an interest in class activities, feel comfortable with their peers, and understand that parents will always come back for them. We understand that some children may initially resist attending class, but it's usually short-lived. Here are some helpful suggestions:

- Focus on the positive aspects of the dance class experience.
- Keep goodbyes brief and avoid prolonged farewells.
- Seek assistance from the teacher during the separation process.

It's okay if dance class may not be the right fit for your child at this moment. If your child expresses distress or does not want to participate, please don't panic. Pushing children beyond their comfort zones may create negative associations with dance. We never want that. Never force your child into the classroom. If your child discontinues classes, we encourage you to try again next year, allowing your child to grow at their own pace.

UNDERSTANDING DANCE EDUCATION

As a parent, your support is invaluable to your child's dance journey. Encourage them to be the best version of themselves, focusing on their own accomplishments rather than comparing themselves to others. Dance is an individual art form, and each student progresses at their own pace. Our dedicated faculty not only teaches technique and steps but also imparts essential life lessons. Through dance, children learn commitment, teamwork, and the rewards of hard work. Our goal is to educate their minds, bodies, and souls, providing them with skills that will serve them well in all aspects of life.



Class Placement

Our experienced faculty carefully considers each student's progress and placement. Placement decisions are based on years of teaching expertise and aim to promote self-esteem and confidence. We understand that every child is unique, and factors influencing placement are complex. Trust in our faculty's judgment and encourage your child to embrace their class with enthusiasm, regardless of the level. Our priority is to provide a positive and empowering environment for each dancer.



Medical Information

Your child's well-being is of utmost importance to us. Please update your Parent Portal with any medical conditions, disabilities, or medications your child may require. Our teachers are professionals who are eager to work with all children, and the more we know about your child, the better we can provide a fulfilling dance experience. Rest assured that all information regarding our students is treated with the utmost confidentiality.



Do's and Don'ts

It's natural for parents and students to draw inspiration from others, but let's focus on personal growth rather than making negative comparisons. Encourage your child to celebrate their achievements and avoid speaking negatively about teachers, fellow students, or other parents. Our faculty takes their role as mentors seriously, guiding students to act respectfully towards their peers, adults, and themselves. If you have questions or concerns, please reach out directly to your child's teacher or the director. Misinformation can be avoided by seeking accurate information from the right sources.

UNDERSTANDING DANCE EDUCATION



Class Progression

Unlike academic settings where students move up a grade level each year, ballet training is a highly individual process. Each dancer develops at their own pace physically, mentally, and artistically. At Ballet Etudes, our faculty places students in the level that will best support their growth, strengthen their technique, and keep them safe from injury.

It's important to understand that not every dancer will advance to the next class level each year. In fact, it is common—and often necessary—for dancers to spend multiple years in the same level to build the strength, discipline, and precision that classical ballet demands. This is not a reflection of a dancer's worth or potential but rather a part of the natural progression of serious ballet training.



Pointe Shoes

Pointe is an exciting and important milestone for many dancers. Readiness for pointe is determined not by age or time spent dancing, but by a dancer's physical strength, alignment, technique, and consistency in class. Beginning in Ballet 3, faculty evaluates each dancer carefully to ensure that pointe work is introduced only when it is safe and appropriate.

A "pointe test" will be given to eligible students, and those who pass will be approved for pointe shoes. Beginning pointe too early can lead to serious injury, so we make these decisions with the utmost care and concern for each student's long-term development.

STAYING INFORMED



We strive to make the dance experience organized and enjoyable for everyone involved. To keep you well-informed, please read all newsletters and studio updates carefully. Newsletters and important updates will be emailed to you. If you have any questions, feel free to contact our office during business hours or send an email. Don't forget to follow us on Instagram for exciting updates!

DRESS CODE



Our dress code is designed to foster focus, inclusiveness, and equality among all dancers. By adhering to a uniform dress-wear, we create an environment where teachers can assess technique, alignment, and other crucial aspects of dance training effectively. Let's embrace the dress code with confidence and unity!

Dance shoes should never be worn outside to preserve their quality and cleanliness. Students with long hair are encouraged to secure their hair tightly and neatly away from their faces, preferably in a tidy bun. Maintaining good personal hygiene habits, including the use of deodorant for students aged 10 & older, is suggested for all dancers.

DRESS CODE REQUIREMENTS



Jewelry

During classes, we kindly request that students avoid wearing watches, large jewelry, and safety pins, as they can be distracting.

Ballet

Male: Black tights, dance pants, or shorts; white T-shirt; black ballet shoes. If you do not have ballet shoes, comfortable socks may be worn until ballet shoes can be purchased.

Female: Level-designated basic leotard (for current leotard dress code requirements, please visit balletetudes.net); pink tights, pink ballet shoes; hair must be secured in a bun; no skirts or warm-ups may be worn during class. If you do not have ballet shoes, comfortable socks may be worn until ballet shoes can be purchased.

Body Conditioning

Dance clothing that enables free movement; hair should be pulled back and out of the face. Bare feet or socks.

Tap

Dance clothing that enables free movement; hair should be pulled back and out of the face. Tap shoes are required.

Jazz

Dance clothing that enables free movement; hair should be pulled back and out of the face. Ballet or jazz shoes.

Modern and Contemporary

Dance clothing that enables free movement; hair should be pulled back and out of the face. Ballet, jazz shoes, or bare feet.

Visit balletetudes.net/dancewear
for links to recommended items

GENERAL POLICIES



At Ballet Etudes Academy, we strive to create a positive and focused environment for our dancers. Please familiarize yourself with our general policies below:

1. Respectful Class Atmosphere: To ensure a productive learning environment, we kindly ask parents and students not to interrupt a class in session. Your cooperation helps us maintain a seamless experience for everyone.

2. Hydration and Nourishment: Water is the only permissible beverage in our studios. We kindly request that you refrain from bringing food, drinks, or gum into the studios. Let's keep our dance spaces clean and enjoyable for all.

3. Safety and Supervision: We cherish the opportunity to meet our students' siblings and appreciate your understanding that the safety of every child on our premises is our top priority. To ensure their well-being, please supervise children at all times.

4. Focused Learning: During class time, we kindly request that all students refrain from using mobile phones, computers, or any electronic devices. Let's stay fully engaged in the dance instruction without distractions.

5. Communication Channels: To streamline communication, we ask students and parents to direct all inquiries, messages, or concerns through the Ballet Etudes Academy email addresses provided on Page 4. Our dedicated team will be happy to assist you promptly and efficiently.

6. Promoting Positivity: It is important that we create a supportive and encouraging atmosphere within our dance community. We kindly request that you refrain from speaking negatively about teachers, students, or parents.

7. Respect for Teachers: Showing respect for our teachers is fundamental to maintaining a positive learning environment. Inappropriate behavior may result in dismissal from the school. Let's cultivate an atmosphere of mutual respect and appreciation.

Visit [balletetudes.net/studio-policies](https://www.balletetudes.net/studio-policies) to learn more

DISCIPLINE POLICY

At Ballet Etudes Academy we believe in creating a positive, nurturing, and professional environment for all our students. We emphasize the importance of being part of a group, respecting others, our teachers and staff, and the studio property. Our goal is to foster good habits and cultivate a culture of compliance with rules of conduct. When a dancer exhibits unacceptable behavior or attitudes, we take a proactive approach. We kindly explain what went wrong and guide them towards a positive alternative approach or behavior.

Disruptive behavior is addressed in a respectful manner. If a dancer's behavior continues to disrupt the class, we kindly ask them to stop. Should the disruption persist, a reminder will be given, highlighting how it affects others. If necessary, the dancer's involved may be asked to take a short break (typically three to five minutes) before rejoining the class.

If a dancer's misbehavior persists and continues to significantly disrupt the class, we may need to involve the parent or guardian. We believe in open communication and will reach out to discuss the situation and request the dancer to be picked up if necessary. Please remember that our ultimate goal is to provide a safe and productive environment for all students.

ANTI-BULLYING, HARASSMENT & VICTIMIZATION

All students, including Company Members, Artistic Staff, Teachers, Board Members, and volunteers, must acknowledge and agree to this policy upon registration within the Parent Portal. Ballet Etudes is dedicated to maintaining a safe, inclusive, and respectful environment, free from bullying, harassment, and discrimination. The policy defines unacceptable behavior and explains how such concerns will be addressed. It applies to all individuals involved in Ballet Etudes activities, both on and off premises. While bullying and harassment will be formally addressed, other interpersonal issues between dancers or parents should first be resolved privately or with Artistic Staff support when needed.

TERMINATION OF ENROLLMENT

In certain rare circumstances, when it is in the best interest of one or more students, the school Director and/or Board of Directors may need to terminate a student's enrollment. We always strive to address and resolve any problematic situation before considering termination. Reasons for termination of enrollment may include disruptive or dangerous behavior by students or their parents, abuse of other children, staff, or property, etc.

We want every student to have a positive and fulfilling dance journey. Rest assured, termination of enrollment is a last resort, and we will make every effort to resolve any challenges that may arise. Let's work together to create an uplifting and joyful dance experience for everyone involved!

ARRIVAL AND DEPARTURE



At Ballet Etudes Academy we value punctuality and safety for all our students. We kindly ask students to arrive 5-10 minutes before their class begins, allowing them to settle in and prepare for an amazing dance experience. To ensure the safety of our young dancers, children under the age of 10 should be picked up promptly after their class. Please understand that we are unable to assume responsibility for students before or after their scheduled classes, so it's essential for parents to ensure timely drop-off and pick-up.

We understand that unforeseen circumstances or emergencies may arise, causing delays. Our priority is to keep your child calm and safe until they can be collected. If any Ballet Etudes volunteers or staff must stay with your child after class or rehearsal ends, there will be a \$10.00 service fee after the first 10 minutes and a \$5.00 fee for every 5 minutes after that, the fee will be assessed and billed to the parent's account. Please call the studio to notify the office if you will be late due to an emergency.

ATTENDANCE



Every class at Ballet Etudes Academy is a step forward in the educational journey of our students. Regular attendance is essential for continuous progress and growth. From January through May, choreography for the year-end Showcase will be taught and rehearsed. It's crucial for children to feel completely confident with the choreography and their performance. Missing classes during this period could lead to frustration for the students, their teachers, and their classmates. We encourage all students to prioritize their dance education and make attending classes a top priority.

TARDINESS



Dance is a physical activity that requires a properly warmed-up body to ensure safe movement execution. Students who arrive late miss out on the essential warm-up and/or barre exercises, which may increase the risk of injury. To prioritize the safety and well-being of our students, those arriving more than 10 minutes late may be asked to observe the class. We want all our dancers to enjoy their dance journey while staying safe and injury-free.

CLASS VISITORS:



For the safety of our students and to fulfill our responsibilities, we are unable to permit visitors in the classroom during regular class sessions. Students should refrain from inviting siblings, relatives, or friends to their classes.

MAKEUP CLASSES:



We understand that unforeseen circumstances may cause a student to miss a class. To ensure they don't miss out on the valuable learning experience, we offer the opportunity to make up the missed class with a similar one by scheduling makeup classes in your Parent Portal.

LOST AND FOUND:



We know how easy it is for dance-wear, shoes, and personal items to get misplaced. To avoid any confusion, please make sure to label all your child's belongings with their name. We will make every effort to locate and return lost items; however, we kindly ask for your understanding that we cannot be held responsible for any items your child brings to class.

EMERGENCY EVACUATION:



We prioritize preparedness and the safety of our students and staff. In the event of an emergency, students will calmly and quietly evacuate to the designated area. Our dedicated teachers will take attendance to ensure everyone's safety. Students and teachers will return to the building only when the all-clear signal is given, indicating that it is safe to do so.

Visit [balletetudes.net/studio-policies](https://www.balletetudes.net/studio-policies)
to learn more

ILLNESS:

The health and well-being of our students and staff are of the utmost importance to us. We kindly request your cooperation in keeping our dance community healthy. If your child exhibits any of the following symptoms, we kindly ask that you keep them at home to prevent the spread of illness:

- Nasal discharge that is green or yellow
- Complaints of ear pain
- Consistent cough
- Severe sore throat
- Pink, burning, itching, or discharging eyes
- Diarrhea or vomiting
- Fever

If these symptoms or any other contagious conditions are observed in your child during a class, we will promptly contact you to arrange for their immediate pick-up. When your child has a fever, please keep them at home until their temperature returns to normal. Furthermore, if there are any lingering signs of illness such as glassy or watery eyes, listlessness, or drowsiness, we kindly request that you keep your child at home. This precaution will ensure that the illness has fully passed, and your child will be well enough to fully participate in class activities the following week.

PARKING LOT SAFETY:

The safety of our dance family is our top priority. When entering and exiting our parking lot, we kindly ask everyone to exercise extreme caution. Please be mindful of the presence of children of all ages. It is essential to park only in designated parking spaces and avoid parking in areas that are not intended for vehicles. Additionally, we kindly request that you refrain from idling your car if parked in close proximity to the building. For the safety of all, we kindly ask that siblings do not play in the parking lot. Let's create a safe and secure environment for everyone to enjoy.

**Visit [balletetudes.net/studio-policies](https://www.balletetudes.net/studio-policies)
to learn more**

SHOWCASE

Our annual Showcase is an exciting opportunity for students to showcase their hard work and progress. Early in the New Year, we will distribute a comprehensive Showcase handbook containing all the necessary information for a smooth and enjoyable experience. It serves as a guide for parents and students, ensuring everyone is well-informed and prepared for this exciting event.

The Power of Performance:

Our Showcase provides a professionally directed platform for students to present their achievements to family and friends. It not only enhances their dance training but also contributes to their overall personal development. The experience builds self-esteem, confidence, social skills, and prepares them for future endeavors. Through rehearsals, students learn the importance of teamwork and the joy of creating something remarkable together.

Costumes:

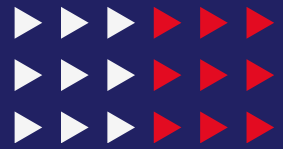
We devote significant time and effort in selecting appropriate and high-quality costumes for our dancers. To ensure timely delivery and organized distribution, costume orders are placed early in the New Year. Our costumes are always carefully selected to be age-appropriate. We prioritize the comfort and aesthetic appeal of our dancers.





BALLET ETUDES

SINCE 1986



**Thank you
for being part of
Ballet Etudes Academy!**

