

First State Dance Academy



Parent Handbook

Policies/Procedures

Subject to Change

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Mission Statement...

Our mission is to help develop the artistic talents of dedicated students by giving them the knowledge, background, and technique needed to accomplish their personal goals.

How Do I Know...

that I have chosen the right dance studio? Choosing the right dance studio is an important decision. Parents should consider the qualifications and experience of the director and instructors, observe classes when possible, and compare programs, performance opportunities, and student achievements.

At FSDA, we are proud to provide experienced instruction in a positive, supportive environment where dancers build strong technique, confidence, and a lifelong love of dance.

How to Register...

Register through a link on our website, www.firststatedance.org, or come in during business hours for assistance.

You will have online access or through a mobile app to your account where you may update payment information, make payments, change expiration dates on credit cards, change addresses, check emails, and schedules, etc. Registration requires a non-refundable registration fee. Once you register, we will only contact you if there is a problem. If you do not hear from us, attend your first class when the studio opens the day after Labor Day. You will acknowledge that you accept our terms when you register online and/or attend your first class.

Evaluations for proper class placement...

The first month of students' classes is for evaluations for ages 8+ and also allows FSDA to cancel, move, or combine classes due to enrollment. At times, students are evaluated for proper placement despite previously suggested levels, age, or years of dancing. Enrollment of classes may or may not be changed until the end of the first month due to our no-refund policy. You may finish out the first month and then decide whether to continue until **December 1st**.

Class Placement Policy... (Placed by age or recommendations from instructors)

Beginning at age 8, class placement is based primarily on a student's technical ability, strength, and readiness to safely progress to the next level. Advancement is not determined solely by age or the number of years a student has been dancing. At First State Dance Academy, our instructors always make placement decisions with each student's best interests in mind. Unlike many dance schools that promote students to a new level every year, FSDA believes that strong technical training is the foundation for long-term success. It is common—and often beneficial—for students to remain at the same level for more than one year while they continue to develop the strength, coordination, and understanding required for advancement. Ballet technique requires patience, consistency, and years of dedicated training. Progress is intentionally gradual so that proper technique becomes second nature before more advanced skills are introduced. Advancing too quickly can result in poor technical habits that are difficult to correct, increase the risk of injury, and may ultimately lead to frustration or discouragement. The exception to this policy applies to our program sessions and classes below the Ballet A level. Placement in these classes is based primarily on age and instructor recommendation.

Pointe classes: Dancers must maintain no less than 3 ballet classes per week and healthy weight management for safe pointe work, and when ready, will be invited by their instructor around ages 10+ to begin preparation for class.

Class Minimum Requirements...*Class participation will not be allowed if students are more than 10 minutes late (for physical safety reasons). They may stay to observe and/or take notes. Ballet A & B- 2 times/week, Ballet C & up, and Pointe-no less than 3 classes/week. Ballet class must be taken before pointe.*

Absences...

If your child will be absent, please report the absence through the Parent Portal mobile app or by emailing us at firststatedance@verizon.net. If your child will be out for an extended period, please notify the studio as soon as possible. Students may be eligible to make up a missed class with instructor approval in a class at their current level or a lower level. Please check with your instructor to determine an appropriate make-up class.

Excellent attendance is especially important as we approach the annual Dance Concert. Consistent class attendance ensures students learn and retain choreography, build confidence, and participate fully in their dance routines.

Regular attendance also supports proper technical development, physical strength, flexibility, and overall well-being. Every class is an important step in your dancer's growth and success.

Tuition and Payment Methods...

First State Dance Academy accepts cash, checks, and credit cards for tuition and merchandise purchases. Please note that credit card processing fees apply, while cash and check payments incur no additional processing fees.

A fee will be assessed for any returned payments. Monthly tuition payments must be automatically withdrawn.

For the security and accuracy of your account, dance instructors are not permitted to accept payments. Payments may only be accepted by the front desk staff, business manager, or studio director. For your convenience, secure locked payment drop boxes are available inside the front entrance and outside the building for tuition or other miscellaneous payments when office staff is unavailable.

Tuition & Payments...

Tuition is based on **38 weeks of instruction** and is not adjusted for absences, vacations, holidays, weather-related closings, or session programs.

Monthly Payment Plan

- Annual tuition is divided into **10 equal monthly payments** from **September through June**.
- Automatic payments are processed on the 5th of each month.
- Payments may be made through automatic bank withdrawal (ACH) or credit card (credit card processing fees apply).
- Accounts with past-due balances may be charged at any time without prior notice.

Annual Payment Option

Families who choose to pay tuition in full at the time of registration by cash or check will receive a **5% tuition discount**.

Missed Classes & Medical Absences

- Tuition is not refunded or credited for missed classes.
- If a student is unable to dance due to a documented medical condition and provides a physician's written excuse, tuition for the affected billing period may be adjusted. The account will be charged the equivalent of the single-class rate for classes attended during that payment cycle if that amount is less than the monthly tuition.
- Make-up classes may be offered when available and only with instructor approval.

Withdrawal Policy

- Tuition is **non-refundable after December 1**.
- To withdraw from classes before December 1, a **written letter or email** must be submitted to First State Dance Academy. Phone calls or verbal notifications cannot be accepted as official notice.
- Tuition is due for the **entire month** in which the withdrawal occurs.
- **No withdrawals or class drops will be accepted after December 1.**

Account Standing

Students must maintain an account in good standing to participate in classes, rehearsals, performances, and the annual Dance Concert. If a student withdraws and later wishes to return, a re-admittance registration fee will apply.

Late Fees & Receipts

Late fees will be assessed on all overdue accounts. Payment receipts will be automatically emailed to families with an email address on file or provided at the front desk upon request.

Discounts/Scholarships... (discount applies to the lowest tuition only)

A \$30 annual registration fee is charged for each of the first two children in a family. Additional children register at no charge.

Family Tuition Discount

Families with multiple enrolled students receive 10% off the tuition of one child—specifically, the student with the **lowest** tuition amount. Only one family tuition discount may be applied per family.

Work-Study Scholarships

A limited number of work-study scholarships are available. Families interested in learning more are encouraged to email the studio for additional information and availability.

Boys' Tuition Scholarship

Male students are eligible to receive **50% off tuition** after completing two consecutive years at First State Dance Academy. To remain eligible, students must:

- Be enrolled in ballet classes.
- Participate in partnering classes when offered and/or when deemed ready by the instructor.
- Commit to performing with FSDA's pre-professional dance company, **DanceCompany-X** (applicable company fees apply).

Costumes... Subject to change

The costume ordering process for our end-of-year studio performance begins in the fall. Guardians are responsible for accurately measuring their dancers and submitting measurements on the costume order forms and/or through the online system.

When selecting sizes, please size up if the dancer's girth measurement is close to the next size to allow room for growth. FSDA staff members are available to assist with questions; however, guardians are ultimately responsible for selecting the correct size, and staff members are not responsible for sizing decisions.

Costume Payments

- Costume deposits are due at the time costume order forms are submitted.
- If a winter performance is offered, some costumes may be available through rental from DanceCompany-X and will require a rental fee, while other costumes may need to be purchased.
- Additional costume-related expenses may apply, including accessories such as tights, undergarments, shoes, and other required items.
- All costume orders are final. **No refunds will be issued for costumes that have already been ordered.**

If costume forms, measurements, or payments are not submitted by the required deadlines, late fees may apply.

Costume Payment Schedule

- Costume deposits not received with the order form will be automatically charged with **January tuition payments**.
- Remaining costume balances will be automatically charged with the **February 5th tuition payment** unless paid in advance.
- Families who pay annual tuition in full by cash or check must pay costume fees in full when submitting costume orders if no payment information (credit card or bank account) is on file.

When costumes arrive, students will try them on during class to confirm proper fit. If an exchange is needed, FSDA will assist in coordinating exchanges whenever possible. Families will be responsible for any applicable **packaging, postage, and restocking fees** associated with costume exchanges. If you believe your child missed their costume try-on or distribution class, please contact the front desk. All accounts must be in **good standing**; costumes may be taken home.

Dance performances...

First State Dance Academy will make every effort to schedule the annual Dance Concert for the second weekend in June, typically on a Saturday afternoon. Mandatory on-stage rehearsals will take place the morning of the performance. All year-round students, with the exception of adult classes and Open classes, are required to participate in the studio's production(s). Performance participation is an important part of the student's dance education and provides an opportunity to showcase their hard work, growth, and accomplishments.

The mandatory on-stage rehearsal schedule and performance order will be sent to families and posted at the studio prior to the show(s) for review and any necessary corrections. Students must have their accounts in good standing to receive costumes and participate in performances. Dancers with past-due accounts will not be permitted to receive costumes and/or perform until the account has been resolved.

Auditions for FSDA's Dance Company...

for acceptance into FSDA's non-profit dance company, **DanceCompany-X**, will occur in August or September. Check the Dance Concert program, bulletin boards, brochures, and social media for more information. There are audition fees, company fees, and mandatory duties required along with weekend rehearsals. These parts are not rehearsed during normal dance class times but on the weekends. Company fees include costumes, ballet classes, and extra performance opportunities, permitted attendance at cast parties and events, etc... This is an exceptional opportunity for students to

continue improving and growing as dancers while working with others, building confidence, and developing valuable teamwork skills.

Dance Concert Tickets and DVDs... (May)

Each family will not be receiving any complimentary tickets to any shows due to the rising costs of rentals and operational costs that continue over the summer. Tickets and show recordings will be available for purchase at the studio, online, and at the performance venue. Dancers will not have to purchase a ticket and may watch the performance in the audience's general seating area but not in costume. All audience members except for the dancers and children aged three and under must purchase a ticket to see the show and must present a tix stub or digital ticket to enter the seating area. **No personal video recording & digital photographs with lit screens are allowed.** You will be notified by email or phone call when the orders are available for pickup or accessible online.

Open Houses/Observations... (Winter/Spring)

Open House will be the week before we close for winter (Christmas) & spring break (Easter). Parents are permitted to observe classes in the dance rooms at this time. Space is limited, so please try to only bring the immediate family. You may take pictures and record your child(ren) during our open houses. If you need to observe your child's class at any other time, you must notify the director with the reason why so a follow-up communication can occur and give proper notice to the instructor.

Pictures... (Scheduled, if available)

If a photographer can be hired, pictures will be taken in dance concert costumes during scheduled times at FSDA. Ask the dance instructor what to wear regarding the color of tights, shoes & other accessories. Information will also be emailed. You may have to reserve times to be photographed depending on the photographer.

Communication... (Always)

We make every attempt to keep you informed about what is going on at FSDA. We have the following means of communication: in our lobby- dry-erase board, the bulletin board in the back, emails, our studio software program, mobile App, texting, our website, **Facebook, Instagram**, and verbal reminders from teachers and/or the receptionist.

Dancewear for Sale...

Ballet, contemporary, and tap shoes, leotards, tights, ballet skirts, dance bags, nude leotards, and seasonal dance cover-ups (ballet sweaters/leg warmers) are mostly available at FSDA for purchase. We also have a used rack of dance clothes and shoes located in the back lobby (prices as marked). Inquire to see if our online store is available!

Dance Code/Attire... (NO GUM, jewelry (earring & nose studs or small rings only, and hair pulled back away from the face, no visible cell phones)

Dance with Me & Creative Movement: Pink leotards with attached skirts are available for purchase at FSDA, or any color leotards, tutus, or ballet skirts may be worn; pink tights or no tights, and ballet shoes, with hair pulled back away from the face or in a ballet bun.

Intros 4 & 5: Light blue leotard with an attached skirt, pink full-footed tights, pink ballet shoes. Hair is to be completely secure to the head and away from the face and in a ballet bun or ponytail if the hair does not reach the face. The dance uniform is to be purchased at FSDA.

Beginner Ballet/Tap and Intermediate Ballet/Tap: Lilac leotard with attached skirt, pink full-footed tights, and pink ballet shoes. Hair is to be completely secure to the head and away from the face; ponytails are acceptable if the hair is too short to go in a bun & must not reach the face. The dance uniform is to be purchased at FSDA.

Ballet levels A and up: Level A- **Black** leotard, (dance alignment belt can be worn), Ballet B- **Muberry** leotard, Ballet C- **Plum** leotard, Ballet D- **Teal** leotard, Ballet E- **Royal Blue**, Ballet F- **Burgundy**. Hair in a bun, no skirts (except pointe, above the knees), pink footed/ convertible tights with no runs/holes worn under the leotard.

Contemporary, Jazz, and Tap class: Any color leotard, tights, jazz pants, dance shorts, jazz shoes, and half-sole shoes for contemporary. **Tan** split-sole jazz shoes. No street clothes. For Tap shoes, the instructor will inform families of the shoes required. Hair must be pulled away from the face. Discover Dance- Leggings, exercise tops, black jazz shoes.

Adult Ballet & Tap: Any color leotards, black/pink/or tan tights, ballet shoes, dance cover-ups may be worn (dance shirts/sweaters, ballet skirts, leggings), hair pulled away from the face and secured to the head.

Dancer's Code of Conduct

At First State Dance Academy, we strive to create a safe, respectful, and encouraging environment where every student can learn, grow, and thrive. All dancers are expected to uphold the following standards:

Preparedness & Dress Code

- Arrive on time and prepared for class in the proper dress code.
- Dance shoes and tights should be in good condition. Shoes must be properly sewn, and tights and shoes should be free of holes. Do not wear body lotion, which can make the floors very slippery.
- Students should arrive and leave the studio wearing appropriate street clothing over their dancewear when necessary.
- Dance shoes are never to be worn outside, as this can damage the shoes, scratch tap shoes, and track dirt into the studios.

Respect & Classroom Behavior

- Treat fellow students, instructors, staff, and studio property with kindness and respect.
- Bullying, gossiping, forming exclusive cliques, teasing, or any behavior that excludes or intimidates others will not be tolerated and may result in a parent conference and/or dismissal from the studio.
- Students are expected to listen attentively during instruction. Talking while the teacher is teaching or displaying disrespectful behavior is not acceptable.

Studio Expectations

- Students may not leave the premises without parent or guardian permission.
- Only water is permitted in the dance studios. Food, gum, and all other beverages are prohibited.
- Jewelry should not be worn during class unless specifically approved by the instructor.
- Cell phones must be turned completely off (not on silent or vibrate) and remain out of sight during class.
- If a studio is vacant before class begins, students need to be ready to start unless the instructor will meet them to line them up before entering the studios (younger dancers).

Dance Etiquette

- At the conclusion of each class, students should acknowledge their instructor by bowing, curtsying, or applauding before quietly exiting or preparing for their next class. This tradition reflects the respect and discipline that are an important part of dance education.

Regular attendance is essential for both individual progress and the success of the class. Excessive absences, particularly during the months leading up to the annual Dance Concert, may affect a student's ability to perform the choreography safely and confidently. Students who have not sufficiently learned their routines may be asked to sit out portions of a dance or, in some cases, the entire dance from the class(es) excessively missed.

Studio Facilities

To help keep our facilities available for everyone, students should not change clothes in the restroom. Please arrive dressed for class whenever possible or use the designated changing area (reception office) if available.

Choreography & Intellectual Property

Choreography, class exercises, combinations, and instructional materials taught by First State Dance Academy instructors are the intellectual property of the studio and its faculty. They may not be performed, taught, shared, or used without the instructor's permission.

A Final Thought...

Being a dance student is both a privilege and a commitment. Show gratitude for the opportunity to learn, respect those who teach and support you, and always represent First State Dance Academy with integrity, kindness, and professionalism.

Parent's Code of Conduct

Parents and guardians play an essential role in creating a positive, respectful, and supportive environment at First State Dance Academy. We ask that all families partner with us by following these expectations:

Support Every Dancer

Celebrate and encourage all dancers—not just your own. Every student deserves to feel valued, respected, and supported.

Negative comments or inappropriate discussions about dancers, parents, instructors, other dance studios, or dance organizations are not acceptable. Dance studios are close-knit communities, and rumors or comments taken out of context can quickly become hurtful and damaging. We ask all families to help foster a culture of kindness, encouragement, and respect.

Encourage Growth

Enjoy watching your child develop as both a dancer and an individual. Every dancer will experience successes as well as challenges throughout their training and at different times than others. These experiences are a natural part of learning, building resilience, and developing the perseverance that will benefit them both in and out of the studio.

Following performances, offer positive encouragement and celebrate your child's accomplishments. Allow them to enjoy the moment and take pride in the hard work they have invested.

Come Prepared

Parents are responsible for ensuring their dancer arrives fully prepared for every class with all required items, including:

- Proper dance attire
- Appropriate dance shoes
- Hair secured according to the studio dress code
- Any additional supplies required for class

The studio **dress code** will be strictly enforced to maintain safety, professionalism, fairness, and uniformity in the classroom.

Commitment to Training

As dancers advance, particularly those studying pointe, dance becomes a year-round commitment. Consistent training is essential for maintaining strength, technique, flexibility, and conditioning while reducing the risk of injury due to mental and/or physical fatigue.

Families are encouraged to recognize that serious dance training is a significant commitment. Careful scheduling helps avoid conflicts, prevents burnout, and allows dancers to benefit from their training. As dancers advance into the higher levels of training, dance becomes a significant year-round commitment. Participating in multiple high-level extracurricular activities may make it difficult to fully commit to each one and can impact attendance, progress, performance preparation, and overall success. We encourage families to carefully consider scheduling commitments so dancers can receive the full benefit of their training while maintaining a healthy balance.

Value Attendance & Punctuality

Please ensure your dancer arrives on time for every class. Dance instruction follows a progressive format in which each exercise prepares the body for the next. Missing warm-ups or arriving late can increase the risk of injury and hinder technical development.

Regular attendance is essential for steady progress. Frequent absences can delay advancement, impact choreography, and affect both the individual dancer and the class as a whole.

Partner With Us

Our faculty is committed to providing every student with a positive, safe, and high-quality dance education. By working together with mutual respect, open communication, and a shared commitment to each dancer's success, we can provide an exceptional experience for every family at First State Dance Academy.