

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 for my child? Learn about the director's and staff's dance and performance experiences. Take a moment to view pictures, videos, and/or go visit the studio and ask to observe the higher-level classes to see what is in store for your child's future! Check to see if they have posted their student's accomplishments and visit other studios to compare! FSDA IS the right place for your child because we have been proven successful!

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 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 31st**.

Class Requirements... (Placed by age or recommendations from instructors)

At the age of 8 and above, some class placements are based on if the student is safely ready and technically able to move up to the next level. It may not depend on how old they are and/or how many years they have danced. FSDA's staff always has the student's best interest at hand. We do not have twelve levels like a "normal" school offers to move them up every year. Be prepared to know that some students will remain in a class/level for a few years before they are ready to move up. The technique is taught and must be understood and demonstrated properly before moving onward. Ballet technique is slow progress (some have even said "boring" at times) but please understand it takes years of training and studies to be able to progress. If a child moves up too quickly, their technique may be poor and hard to "fix" and they could get injured and/or discouraged. The exception to this rule is with program sessions and classes below Ballet 1 level. These classes are based on age primarily and instructor recommendations. This information is available in the studio brochure.

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 1 & 2- 2 times/week, Ballet 3 & up, and Pointe-no less than 3 classes/week. Ballet class must be taken before pointe.*

Absences...

Please give us a call or email us at firststatedance@verizon.net if your child cannot attend a class for a **long period**. Check with your instructor to see if you can make up the class with a level equal to or lower than their current level. Please make sure the attendance is excellent before our Dance Concert to ensure knowledge of the choreography and full participation in the dance number(s). Being present helps their growth and maintains healthy muscles and minds!

Payment Methods...

Checks, cash, and credit cards (fees may apply) are accepted for purchases. There will be fees applied for any returned payments. Teachers are not allowed to accept any payments, and only front desk staff, business manager, or director may accept payments. We also have a locked mailbox located inside the front door and outside for miscellaneous payments.

Tuition Payments...

Tuition is based upon 38 weeks of instruction regardless of absences, vacations, weather closings, or holidays, and for instruction for session programs. Auto-withdrawn payments are processed on the 5th of every month from September to June, which are broken down into 10 monthly payments. Payments are automatically withdrawn from your bank account or by credit card (with processing fee) if you choose the monthly payment plan. Tuition may also be withdrawn at **any time without notice** if there is a past-due balance. If you choose to pay for the whole year, you'll receive a 5% discount by paying with check or cash and is due when you sign up. No credit/ refunds will be given for missed classes. If a student has a doctor's excuse, your account will be charged based on a single class fee for the number of classes taken during an interrupted payment cycle if that is less expensive than the monthly cost. Classes may only be made up, if possible, by the availability of the teacher. Tuition is non-refundable after December 31st or within the month of dropping classes before December 31st. A letter or email of withdrawal must be submitted to FSDA to stop the billing process (no phone calls and/or verbal messages). Tuition is due for the whole month in which you drop before December 31st. Students may not participate in classes and/or the Dance Concert if an account is not in good standing. If the student withdraws and would like to re-enter the program, a re-admittance fee will be applied. No drops/withdrawals will be accepted after **December 31st**. Late fees will be applied to all overdue accounts. Receipts will be automatically emailed to you if you have an email address on file with us or handed to you at the front desk.

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

Registration-\$30 for the first two children, then \$0.00 each additional. Family Tuition Discount: 10% off only 1 child with the lowest student tuition (only 1 per family discount applies). There are few work-study scholarships available. Please email if interested. **Boys** receive 50% off tuition after 2 consecutive years at FSDA and must be enrolled in ballet and partnering (when ready and/or offered) and agree to perform in FSDA's dance company, DanceCompany-X (applicable fees to be in the company).

Costumes... Subject to change

The process of ordering mandatory costumes will take place starting in the fall for our end-of-year-studio performance. Guardians are responsible for measuring their children and putting measurements on the order forms and/or in the system. Please size up to allow them to grow if the girth measurement is close to the next size. My staff will be able to assist you but will not be responsible for choosing the correct size. Costume deposits are due when the order forms are turned in. If we do a winter performance, some costumes will be charged a rental fee if they are rented from the dance company while some will have to be purchased. Costumes may have additional costs for accessories (tights, undergarments, etc.). There are no refunds on costumes already ordered. There will be late fees if the forms or sizes are not turned in before times are determined. **Costume deposits** will be taken out with January's tuition payment if not received with the order form(s). **Costume balances will be taken out with February 5th's** tuition payment if not paid beforehand. If you choose to pay the full year by check or cash, costumes must be paid in full when you turn in your order form for those accounts without payment information on file (credit card or bank account).

As the costumes arrive, we will have the students try them on during their classes to make sure they fit and/or exchange them with other students. You will be charged for packaging, postage, and any re-stocking fees applied for exchanges. See the front desk if you believe your child missed the class where they were handed out. Accounts must be in good standing before you can take the costume(s) home.

Dance performances...

We will make every attempt to schedule our end-of-the-year Dance Concert for the 2nd weekend in June, usually on a Saturday afternoon with morning mandatory on-stage rehearsals. Winter performance will be determined and announced mid-September if there will be one. **All year-round students (except adults or Open classes) are required to perform in the school's production(s).** The mandatory on-stage rehearsal schedule and show order will be sent out to you and posted at the studio sometime before the show(s) for corrections. **Dancers will not be permitted to receive their costumes and/or perform if their account is past due.**

Auditions for FSDA's Dance Company...

for additional parts and to be accepted into FSDA's dance company, DanceCompany-X, will occur in August or September. Check the Dance Concert program, bulletin boards, 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...

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. Tickets and show recordings will be available for purchase at the studio 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 tix stub or wristband to enter the theatre. **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 classes or scheduled times at FSDA. Ask the instructor what to wear regarding the color of tights, shoes & other accessories. Information will be also 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 & 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 in the back lobby (prices as marked). Inquire to see if our online store is available!

Dance Code/Attire... (NO GUM, 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 (when available), 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, and no jewelry. 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 and no jewelry. The dance uniform is to be purchased at FSDA.

Ballet levels 1 and up: Levels 1 **Black** leotard, (dance alignment belt can be worn), Ballet 2- **Jade** leotard, Ballet 3- **Navy Blue** leotard, Ballet 4- **Plum** leotard, Ballet 5- **Burgundy**. Hair in a bun, no skirts (except pointe, above the knees), pink footed/ convertible tights with no runs/holes worn under the leotard, no jewelry except for stud earrings.

Contemporary, Modern, Musical Theatre, Jazz, and Tap class: Any color leotard, tights, jazz pants, dance shorts, jazz shoes, and Contemporary- half sole shoes for contemporary and modern classes. Jazz sneakers may be purchased with teacher permission only. No street clothes. For Tap shoes, the instructor will inform families of the shoes required. Hair must be pulled away from the face.

Adult Ballet & Open Ballet: 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, no jewelry.

Dancer's Code of Conduct:

Each student should be on time for each class and prepared with proper dress code requirements. No holes in shoes or tights and shoes must be sewn. To create a positive environment, laughing, gossiping, forming “cliques” alienating other students, or bullying of any form are grounds for parental conferences and/or dismissal. Disrespectful behavior toward other students and staff and talking during instruction are not tolerated. No student is to leave the premises without parental permission. No jewelry, chewing gum, food, beverages except for water, and cell phones (must be turned off, not on vibrate) are allowed in the dance studios. Older students must be in the dance room before the teacher arrives if it is vacant. When the class has ended, students shall turn toward the teacher, clap or curtsy, or bow then exit the class or get ready for the next class, demonstrating proper dance etiquette. Clapping while exiting is not proper. Students must have appropriate clothes on when arriving and leaving the dance studio. Do not wear dance shoes outside because this scratches taps and carries dirt and ruins other types of dance shoes. Class attendance is imperative to personal and class progression. If a child misses too many classes the few months before the Dance Concert and does not know the routine well enough, they may not be in the entire dance with the other dancers in the class. Students will not change clothes in the bathroom as we only have one to use for everyone else. No student may use a teacher's choreography and classroom material without permission. Remember you are privileged to be a student of dance, so appreciate those who have given you this opportunity!

Parent's Code of Conduct:

Support all dancers, even those not related to you. Negative comments to or about any dancer, other dance organizations, parent, or studio shall not occur. Gossip travels fast in a dance studio and even faster in the community. Comments taken out of context can snowball into damaging and hurtful arguments between parents, dancers, and faculty. Enjoy watching your children grow and learn as dancers. Keep in mind that while every parent wants their children to be the best they can be, we all know that along with the successes, there will be failures. This is a natural part of growing up and we hope students will learn from those experiences and be better equipped for adulthood. Be sure to only give positive feedback to dancers after they perform. Let them be proud of their performance and enjoy the moment with them. The faculty at FSDA depends on the parent to make sure their child has ALL the supplies needed for class preparation. This includes proper attire, shoes, hair supplies, etc. The dress code will be strictly enforced. Understand that once a dancer reaches a certain level of technique, dance becomes a year-round commitment (especially when they are on pointe) to maintain strength and prevent serious injury. Scheduling conflicts and dancer and parent burnout can be avoided by understanding that being a serious dancer is a major commitment that is more than enough to satisfy any child's extracurricular desires. It is also important to be on time because the class consists of progressive exercises and training. Absences can affect the improvement of dancers, so please be sure to get them to all their classes so they can safely progress through the levels.