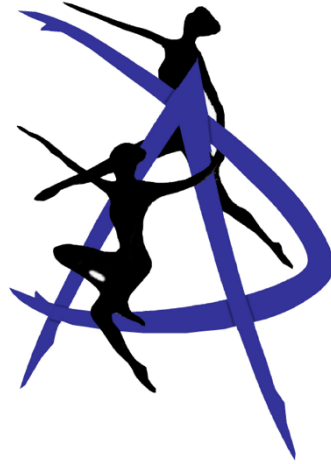


First State Dance Academy



Parent Handbook

Policies/Procedures

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How do I Know...

that I have chosen the right dance studio for my child? Check 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 of 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!

How to Register...

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

You will have on-line access to your account where you may also update payment information, change expiration dates on credit cards, addresses, emails, schedules, etc. Registration requires a non-refundable registration fee. You will only receive a phone call if there is a problem. If you do not hear from us, just show up for your first class which always begins the day after Labor Day.

Evaluations for proper class placement...

The first month of classes are for studio/schedule evaluations which allows FSDA to cancel, move, or combine classes due to enrollment. At times, students aged 8+ are evaluated for proper placement despite previously suggested levels, age, or years of dancing. 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 then decide whether to continue until February 1st.

Payment Methods...

Auto withdrawn payments are due by the 5th of every month (or the next business day) from September to June (10 monthly payments). Payments are automatically withdrawn from your bank account or by credit card if you choose the monthly payment plan. Tuition may also be withdrawn at **any time without notice** if there is a past due balance.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 by the semester payment plan (discount applies), we accept checks or cash only for the discount. Semester payments are due by September 15th and February 15th. You will acknowledge that you accept our terms when you register on-line and/or attend classes. There will be fees applied for any returned payments. Checks, cash, credit cards (3% card fee, which includes debit cards) are accepted for any purchases other than the monthly tuition. 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 for payments.

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

Registration-Full cost for the 1st child; family discount applies after 1st child. Family Tuition Discount: 10% off the lowest student tuition (only 1 per family discount applies) for the full school year classes only, no sessions.

Costume Ordering (September/December) Subject to change

In the fall, the process of ordering mandatory costumes will take place for the winter/spring shows. Guardians are responsible for sizing and measuring their own children. My staff will be able to assist you but will not be responsible for choosing the correct size. Bigger is always better because the student may grow before the show dates. You'll have to measure and choose a size and turn in the provided order form with a \$30 costume deposit for each costume. Costumes are a flat fee but may have additional costs for accessories (tights, undergarments, etcetera). There are no refunds on costumes already ordered. You will be charged for packaging, postage and any re-stocking fees applied for exchanges. There will be late fees if the forms, deposits, and final payments are not turned in before the required dates.

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 to give proper notice to the instructor.

Costume Try-on Time... (winter/spring)

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. See 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.

Pictures... (May)

If a photographer can be hired, pictures will be taken in dance concert costumes during classes in May at FSDA. Ask the instructor what to wear regarding color of tights, shoes & other accessories. Please be here for pictures even if you plan on not purchasing any so we can have everyone in the class pictures.

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, parent bulletin board (online), text messages, bulletin board in the back, emails, some on **Facebook, Twitter, Instagram.**

Dance Concert Tickets and DVD's... (May)

Each family will receive one complimentary ticket to the June show and December's show only if there are two performances. Tickets and DVD's will be available for purchase. Dancers may watch in the audience for free but not in costume. All audience members except for the dancers and children aged 3 and under must purchase a ticket to see the show and must wear a wrist band to enter the theatre. **No personal videotaping is allowed.** DVD's will be available in the summer for pickup at FSDA. You will be notified by email and social media when they are ready for pick up at the dance studio.

Dance performances... (December/June)

We will make every attempt to schedule our winter show the 1st weekend in December and our end of the year Dance Concert on the 2nd weekend in June (usually on a Saturday). All year-round students are required to perform in both dance shows (December's show [if it occurs], ages 5+, June's show, everyone). The mandatory on-stage rehearsal schedule and show information will be available on the online bulletin board and posted at the studio.

******Dancers will not be permitted to perform if their account is past due.******

Auditions for additional parts for the winter show and to be accepted into FSDA's dance company, DanceCompany-X, will occur in August or September for ages 8+. There are audition fees, company fees, and mandatory volunteering required along with weekend rehearsals. These parts are not rehearsed during normal dance class times.

Dance wear...

Ballet and tap shoes, leotards, tights, ballet skirts, dance bags, nude leotards, tan tights, seasonal dance cover ups (ballet sweaters/leg warmers) are mostly available at FSDA for purchase. We also have a used dance clothes on the rack (prices as marked). Be on the lookout for our online dance store available through your parent portal!

Contact Information...

Website - www.firststatedance.org / Email - firststatedance@verizon.net 107 Maple Avenue, Milford, DE 19963
Phone - (302) 422-2633.

Business House/ Responsibilities...

Monday - Thursdays from 5:30 - 7:30 PM. Summer hours vary or is by appointment only. FSDA is not responsible for lost or stolen items or supervision of unattended children before and after classes.

Absences...

Please give us a call or email us at firststatedance@verizon.net if your child cannot attend class for a long period of time. Check with your instructor to see if you can make up the class with a level equal to or lower to their current level. Please make sure the attendance is excellent before our show(s) to ensure knowledge of the choreography and full participation.

Tuition Payments...

Tuition is based upon 38 weeks of instruction regardless of absences, vacations, weather closings or holidays and for instruction for session programs. 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. If you choose to pay by the semester, check or cash is accepted for the 5% discount. Credit card or bank account payments will not include the 5% discount for the semester option. A letter or email of withdrawal must be submitted to FSDA to stop the billing process (no phone calls and /or messages to instructors). Tuition is due for the whole month in which you drop. Students may not participate in classes if account is not in good standing. If the student withdraws and would like to re-enter the program, a \$30 re-admittance fee will be applied. No drops will be accepted after **February 1st**. Late fees will be applied to all overdue accounts. Fees will be applied to return payments or checks. 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. There are few work study scholarships available. Please email if interested. **Boys** receive 25% off tuition after 2 consecutive years at FSDA and must be enrolled in ballet and partnering (when ready) and agree to perform in FSDA's dance company, DanceCompany-X performances.

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

After age 7, 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 be able to move them up every year. Be prepared to know that some students will remain in a class/level for more than one year before they are ready to move up. Technique is taught and must be understood and demonstrated properly before moving onward. Ballet technique is a 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, 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.

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. We will not put a student en pointe below the age of 10! There's plenty of free online research you can do to understand why.

School Closings...

Will be announced in one or more of the following ways: via email, on our website, text alerts, social media, or call 302-422-2633. All closings will be decided by 4 PM.

Dance Attire... (NO GUM, and all hair must be pulled back away from the face)

Dance with Me, Tiny Tots & Twinkle Toes: Light blue leotard with attached skirt (when available), pink **full footed** tights, pink ballet shoes. Hair is to be completely secure to the head and away from face, ponytails are acceptable if hair is too short to go in bun, and no jewelry. Dance uniform is to be purchased at FSDA.

Fancy Feet, Beginner Ballet/Tap and Intermediate Ballet/Tap: Lilac leotard with attached skirt, pink **full footed** tights, pink ballet shoes. Hair is to be completely secure to the head and away from face, ponytails are acceptable if hair is too short to go in bun, and no jewelry. Dance uniform is to be purchased at FSDA.

Ballet levels 1 and up: Levels 1 & 2- **Black** leotard, (dance alignment belt can be worn), level 3- **Navy Blue** leotard, level 4+- **Burgundy** leotard. Hair in bun, no skirts (except pointe), pink footed/ convertible tights with no runs/holes, no jewelry except for stud earrings. No ankle jewelry.

Contemporary, Modern, 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, instructor will inform families of shoes required. Hair must be pulled away from the face.

Hip Hop: Loose baggy shorts, jeggings, joggers, leggings, **black** high-top sneakers (which will be utilized with their costumes for performances) and no belly exposure, no offensive wording and/or graphics on shirts. Hair pulled back away from face.

Class Guidelines... (Some are by age or teacher recommendations)

Dance with Me- age 2, Tiny Tots-age 3, Twinkle Toes 4, Fancy Feet 5, Beg. Ballet/ Tap-age 6, Int. Ballet/Tap-age 7, Ballet 1 & up: ages 8+. Jr. Jazz- Ballet 1+, Sr. Jazz-instructor invite, Open tap-ages 8+, Jumpstart Hip Hop-ages: 6-9, Jr. Hip Hop-ages: 10-14, Sr. Hip Hop-ages: 15+ or by instructor invite, Jr. Contemporary-ballet 1+, Sr. Contemporary-instructor invite, Contemporary, and Modern- instructor invite.

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

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.

Dancer's Code of Conduct:

Each student should be on time to each class, 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, cell phones (must be turned off, not on vibrate) are allowed in the dance studios. 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 scratch 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, you 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 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. 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 prevention of serious injury. Scheduling conflicts, 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 the be on time because 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.