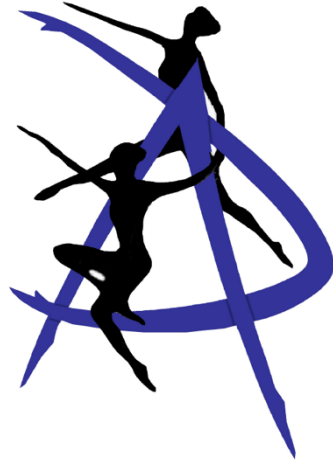


First State Dance Academy



Parent Handbook

Policies/Procedures

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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 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 because we are 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, 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, just show up for your first class which always begins 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 (ages 8+) and 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 be able 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. 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, 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... (Individual Reports available through our software program)

Please give us a call or email us at firststatedance@verizon.net if your child cannot attend a 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 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). If a dancer misses too many classes before the shows, they may be taken out of part of the dance or the show with no refunds.

Payment Methods...

Checks, cash, and credit cards (3% card fee, which includes debit cards) 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 due by the 5th of every month from September to June which are broken down in 10 monthly payments. Payments are automatically withdrawn from your bank account or by credit card (3% 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 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. 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 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/withdraws will be accepted after **December 31st**. Late fees will be applied to all overdue accounts. Fees will be applied to return payments. 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. **Costume deposits** will be taken out with February's tuition payment unless you notify us not to and/or any other time before Feb. 5th. **Costume balances will be taken out with April 5th's** tuition payment if not paid beforehand.

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

Registration-\$30 for the 1st child; then \$15 each additional. Family Tuition Discount: 10% off 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 agree to perform in FSDA's dance company, DanceCompany-X.

Costumes... Subject to change

In the fall and/or spring, the process of ordering mandatory costumes will take place for our studio performances (Dec/June). Guardians are responsible for measuring their own children and putting measurements in the system. 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 or before the costumes are ordered (email will be sent). 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, 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 or sizes are not turned in before times determined. End of the year Dance Concert **costume balances are due by February 5th and/or will be taken out with tuition unless otherwise notified. Costume deposits** will be taken out with February's tuition payment unless you notify us not to and/or any other time before Feb. 5th. **Costume balances will be taken out with April 5th's** tuition payment if not paid beforehand. If you chose to pay the full year by check or cash, costumes must be paid in full when you turn in your order form 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. 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... (December/June)

We will make every attempt to schedule our end-of-the-year Dance Concert for the 2nd weekend in June, usually on a Saturday. Winter performance will be determined and announced by the school's start date in September. **All year-round students are required to perform in the winter show & Dance Concert.** The mandatory on-stage rehearsal schedule and show order will be sent out to you and posted at the studio sometime in late November for winter show and late May for the June show, Dance Concert. The Dance Concert program will be posted or emailed for you to check for your child's name, spelling, etc. **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 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. Company fees include costumes, ballet classes, and extra performance opportunities.

Dance Concert Tickets and DVDs... (May)

Each family will receive one complimentary ticket to the June show only. Tickets and DVDs 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 wristband to enter the theatre. **No personal videotaping is allowed.** DVDs will be available in the summer for pickup at FSDA. You will be notified by email, and it will be posted on social media when the DVDs are available for pickup.

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, the parent bulletin board in our studio software program, 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, tan tights, and seasonal dance cover-ups (ballet sweaters/leg warmers) are mostly available at FSDA for purchase. We also have a used box of shoes for exchanges or for sale and occasionally used dance clothes on the rack (prices as marked).

Dance Code/Attire... (NO GUM, and hair pulled back away from the face)

Dance with Me, Tiny Tots & Twinkle Toes: 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 face, ponytails are acceptable if the 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, and pink ballet shoes. Hair is to be completely secure to the head and away from the face, ponytails are acceptable if hair is too short to go in bun, and no jewelry. The 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.

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

Hip Hop: Loose baggy shorts, jeggings, joggers, leggings, black high-top sneakers, and no belly exposure, no offensive wording and/or graphics on shirts. Hair pulled back away from the face.

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. 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 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 prevention of 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.