

OUR PROCESS & POLICIES TO REOPEN SAFELY

- In-studio class size will be **limited to six students per class**. Any additional students will be admitted by special arrangement based on available space.
- **NO ONE** will be admitted into the building without a mask covering the nose and mouth. We are opting to keep the masks on (see below info on mask-wearing) in class but will allow mask breaks and water breaks during the class. If your child has underlying health issues and cannot wear a face covering, please speak with us. Please do not have students wear masks with a valve or vent. These masks do not help protect others. Valve masks may make it easier for individuals to exhale but also lets their germs out into the air. Wearing this type of mask is like wearing no mask at all.
- Students will enter the building one at a time to insure social distancing. Younger students will be met by our new 'backstage coordinator' Carla Hernandez. Parents, caregivers and siblings should refrain from entering the building. You may call the front desk to confirm your child is safely in the lobby.
- Every person must wash hands upon arrival in the dedicated hand-washing bathroom. All social gathering areas will be closed until further notice. There will be **NO** check-in or sign-out at the front desk.
- Students should come dressed in dance attire, with hair up, and all personal belongings carried inside your dance bag. No school backpacks.
- Students will deposit their street shoes and dance bag in the front lobby cubbies and stand in a socially-distanced line prior to attendance and entry to the studio.
- The girl's dressing room now contains the one available toilet and sink.
- Teachers will disinfect stereos and ballet barres between classes. Common spaces (handrails, door openings, bathrooms, sinks etc.) will be disinfected throughout the day by administrative staff.
- There will be no use of our water dispenser. Students should bring water bottles.
- Classrooms have been marked to specify six-foot distancing at the barre and center. Exercises will be modified to allow for safe and separate movement in place or side-by-side movement across the floor.
- Students who show any symptoms such as fever, chills, sore throat, cold, headache etc. should **NOT** attend in-studio classes.
- Any student or family member who has tested positive for COVID – 19 or has been exposed to someone who has tested positive for COVID-19 must alert the office. Information will be disseminated to impacted students while maintaining strict confidentiality. Please monitor your child for symptoms.
- We have staggered class start and end times to minimize students coming in and out of the facility at the same time. All students will exit onto Depinedo Street for pick-up after class.
- All tuition & registration fee payments will be made online using Square payment links. There will be no refunds for missed classes in the event of closure due to a Covid-related outbreak.

In the words of a recent University of Oxford study, *“Rules on distancing should reflect the multiple factors that affect risk, including ventilation, occupancy, and exposure time.”*

From a recent report by the American Guild of Musical Artists (AGMA, the dancers union) and the Stage Directors and Choreographers Society: *“...everyone is susceptible and 35-50% of people may be asymptomatic or pre-symptomatic carriers. Hence the need for multiple levels of control, starting – most importantly – with personal responsibility. Everyone must work together to protect themselves and to protect each other.”*

WHAT SAFETY MEASURES ARE WE TAKING?

- **Limiting overall number of students/faculty in the building in accord with state guidelines.**
- **Having parents/guardians wait outside the building.**
- **Redirect traffic flow to one-way entry and exit only.**
- **Require hand-washing upon entry and mask-wearing at all times.**
- **Require social-distancing by use of studio markings.**
- **Frequent disinfecting of all high-touch surfaces.**
- **Daily cleaning of studio and lobby floors.**
- **Hand sanitizer available in all studios and lobby area.**
- **Studio 1: Investing in ultraviolet light technology to neutralize microorganisms on surfaces and in air while continually circulating 3000 cubic feet of air/hour**
- **Studio 2 & 3: Maximizing the purity of indoor air by using outside air to enhance overall air exchange.**
- **Upgraded existing air filtration by changing to the highest MERV-rated filter available.**

Masks in the Dance Studio - Harmful or Helpful?

"A challenge only becomes an obstacle when you bow to it." - Ray A. Davis

Since it looks as if masks are here to stay, dance educators and dancers should be aware of how to use them effectively. There has been widespread concern about dancers wearing masks during class –

Will they get enough oxygen?

Will they be inhaling too much carbon dioxide?

If an asymptomatic individual is a carrier and inhales expelled droplets, will he or she develop a full-blown case of the illness?

The good news is that there is no evidence that wearing a mask while exercising causes any harm. While masks do present an added obstacle for the body when exercising, the body is fully capable of overcoming the obstacle and meeting any increased demands of energy. It will take time for the body to adapt just as it does when someone begins a new exercise routine. For this reason, students should begin wearing masks for short periods of time with breaks and gradually work up to completing an entire class with a mask without a break.

Several studies on exercising with masks have been conducted within the past 4 years. These studies included high intensity interval training (2), endurance exercises (3) and resistance training (1) while wearing, much more restrictive, altitude training masks. All have determined that exercising while wearing a mask results in no significant changes in heart rate or

blood pressure. The studies, however, have found an increase in the rate of perceived exertion (the amount of energy the individual feels he or she must be expending) which makes sense because the mask does present an additional obstacle while exercising (1,2,3,4)



While the endurance exercise study found modestly lower levels of oxygen in the subjects, the levels were well tolerated, and since dance does not fall into the category of endurance training, these findings are not a major concern among dancers (3).

Since cloth masks are not sealed, additional oxygen is allowed to enter through the sides, and most of the exhaled carbon dioxide escapes before the next inhalation. Additionally, the body is strong enough to filter out and withstand the small percentage of viral droplets that might be exhaled and inhaled again.

Masks will require an adjustment for dancers, and exercises that focus on breathing – inhaling through the nose and out through the mouth – can help prepare them for dancing with a

mask. It is important to note that masks that become wet due to sweating are ineffective so dancers should also be encouraged to have a second mask in their bags.

It is an adjustment, however, one that our amazing bodies are capable of making. Will it present a challenge? Definitely, but who better to rise to this challenge than dancers?

(1)Andre, Thomas L. et al. (2018) Restrictive Breathing Mask Reduces Repetitions to Failure During a Session of Lower-Body Resistance Exercise, *Journal of Strength and Conditioning Research*, 32 (8), 2103-2108.

(2)Biggs, NC, England BS, Turcotte NJ, Cook MR, and Williams, AL. (2017) Effects of simulated altitude on maximal oxygen uptake and inspiratory fitness. *International Journal of Exercise Science*, 10, 127–136.

(3) Granados, J, Gillum, TL, Castillo, W, Christmas, KM, and Kuennen, MR. (2016) Functional respiratory muscle training during endurance exercise causes modest hypoxemia but overall is well tolerated. *Journal of Strength Conditioning Research*, 30: 755–762.

(4) Maspero M, and Smith JD. (2016) Effect of an acute bout of exercise using an altitude training mask simulating 12,000 ft on physiological and perceptual variables. *International Journal of Exercise Science*, 2 (8), Article 90.