



# Studio & Dancer Handbook

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# Studio Handbook

Please read through the following information to familiarize yourself with the policies of our Studio. The first section should answer most questions that parents may have regarding our administrative procedures. The second section, addressed to our students, should be read by parents as well. You may print out the Studio Handbook and share it with your child.

## **Administration**

The Administrative staff are Jane Madison and Faith Madison Holton. Please see either of them regarding registration, tuition payment, and for any questions or concerns you may have. In general, there will be a person in the lobby during classes to answer any questions or offer help. Otherwise, the office is open via appointment and you may reach us at [jmad5699@gmail.com](mailto:jmad5699@gmail.com), [faith.madisonstudio@gmail.com](mailto:faith.madisonstudio@gmail.com), or call at (478) 361-9946.

## **Announcements**

Parents and caregivers: please take the time to check the website, your email, and the lobby bulletin board and chalkboard, regularly, for important announcements. These include rehearsal and performance schedules, summer intensive announcements, photo days, etc. We also post frequently on Facebook and Instagram so look for announcements there as well! We do most of our communication via email—PLEASE make sure we have the correct email on file!

## **Closings**

The Studio takes all school holiday breaks into account when making our own Holiday and Spring Break assignments. It does not necessarily follow the same schedule. The Calendar is posted in the lobby and on the website. Closings due to inclement weather will be posted on our website and social media pages.

## **Faculty & Substitute Teachers**

Faculty members are well qualified professional dancers, graduates, trained teachers, and working professionals. It is our privilege to have them sharing their talents with our dancers. From time to time, they will have other professional obligations or commitments. In that case, there will be a qualified substitute from the MSDE staff or approved staff or we will reschedule class for another day. Because Saturday Open Class is considered a complimentary class for package students or drop in classes, staff reserves the right to reschedule/cancel class based upon other studio events.

## **Adding or Changing Classes**

Any class or level change must be discussed with the teacher and the Director before making that change. The teacher takes into account the child's development, completion of the MSDE curriculum, terminology understanding, physical strength, demeanor, application of corrections, and respect in regards to level placement.

## **Make-ups and Absences**

Classes missed due to illness or injury may be made up at any time. You are allowed to attend a class that is 1 level above or below your assigned level for a makeup. If you miss class and miss choreography setting, then it is up to the dancer to meet with a fellow dancer and learn before coming into class. If a teacher has to go back to teach choreography the entire class must take extra time to review rather than move forward.

The Madison Studio regards regular, punctual class attendance as an example of the discipline that quality dance requires. Regular class activity greatly enhances technique, flexibility, strength, progress, limits injury, and memory development. Because we customize each dance group's regimen to accommodate the skill levels of each class and set choreography for the class members of each particular group, no credits can be given for missed lessons. Absences, however, may be made up in similar skill or age classes. Keep in mind, if class attendance for the year equates to less than 90%, then it is at the teacher's discretion to prohibit the dancer from moving the next level for the following year. This is for the dancer's own safety.

Call 478-361-99465 or email the studio if the dancer will be absent from class.

## Early Dismissal

If a child needs to leave early from class, please let the teacher know prior. A parent is welcome to wave in the doorway or get the teachers' attention when it is time to leave, but we ask that you please let the teacher send your child out in order to keep the rest of the class' attention in the studio. We thank you for your understanding!

## Classes at No Additional Cost

Dance education is based on a student's full year (or semester) enrollment. The Madison Studio offers a unique opportunity for ambitious students to advance their dance studies at no additional charge: students are encouraged to attend multiple classes each week in the same dance form\* in which they are enrolled. They may choose classes in the same level or in levels above or below their own (some exceptions apply, please check with your instructor before attending). Multiple classes give a dancer an opportunity to excel at a much faster rate and to grasp the concepts and techniques of dance training more quickly.

\*NOTE: A dance "form" is the category of dance studied - Ballet, Jazz, Tap, Modern, etc.

## Food and Drink

NO food and drink is allowed inside the studios. Feel free to bring snacks to leave in your dance bag to eat between classes in the lobby. Only water is allowed and encouraged in the studio.

## Private Lessons

Private coaching is available on a limited basis for MSDE students who wish to intensify their training. Teachers accept students according to their own schedules and studio availability. Fees are determined by the studio and paid directly to the teacher. Private lessons are NOT meant to make up missed work in class.

## Payment

Dance tuition cost is a YEARLY FEE, which is divided and paid in four installments (the first, due in August, is less than the remaining three), due on the first class lesson of the following months: August, October, January, and April, or may be paid in one full installment before August 31, 2023, which is even more heavily discounted. There are discounts for multiple classes and family members! There is a discount built into the stated fees in the fee schedule. You have until the third lesson of August, October, January, and April to pay the installment; if payment has not been received by that time, a statement is prepared and a \$25.00 late fee monthly is added to the account balance. Only past-due statements are sent via e-mail. Please make note on your calendar of the due dates – **statements are not sent unless the account is in arrears.** Checks should be made payable to "MSDE". Money orders or cash are also accepted. We accept credit and debit cards online via the portal, and Venmo via @Madison-Studio. Credit and Debit Cards will incur a credit card processing fee. Returned check charge (NSF) is \$30.00. Ten (10) Monthly payments, August through May, may also be arranged, with an additional \$5 per payment is added for monthly payments. If you request that a check be held to a date beyond the due date, the \$25 late fee will be added for each month. All fees are non-refundable—credit toward future classes only, and non-transferable between students.

## Withdrawal

If withdrawal from the studio is wished to be made, a 60-day written (note or e-mail) notice to the Director (verbal withdrawals are not accepted) must be given before withdrawing during the school term, and tuition will continue to be due until the end of the 60-day notice. Simply stopping attendance to class does not constitute withdrawal from the studio, and the dancer is still considered enrolled and tuition continues to be due until written 60-day notice is given to the Director from the person(s) responsible for the account payments.

## Costume & Recital Fees

The recital fees are technically due with Registration/enrollment. The recital fee includes your dancer's costuming/attire/some accessories specific to each group, and the family recital tickets (each dance family receives two free tickets, this does not apply to our annual production, just recital!). The students are measured for costumes in class during the month of December. The costumes are automatically ordered for you at that time unless you pre-inform the Director by December 1, 2023, that your dancer will not be participating in the 2024 annual recital. Costumes will not be ordered for your dancer unless recital fees are paid in full. Once the costumes are ordered the fee is non-refundable.

## Extra Performance Opportunities

Each year, the Madison Studio offers at least one extra performance production opportunity for the students, separate of our annual recital. This has included production such as *Cinderella*, *Swan Lake*, *Georgia Roots*, *Le Corsaire*, *Giselle*, *Coppelia*, *Sleeping Beauty*, *Madeleine*, and *Fall into the Holidays*. The opportunity to be cast into this production does involve an extra performance fee and mandatory rehearsals. Unlike recital, free tickets are not given unless signed up as a parent volunteer. This is the perfect opportunity to be exposed to a full length ballet and seeing how a production is put together!

## Contact Information

At the beginning of each dance year, please fill out a new registration form or complete your profile online for each dancer. We use this information given to contact you about events, rehearsals, fees, etc. Please make sure you update us with your CURRENT email as this is how we do most of our communication, other than in the lobby and via social media.

Positive, open communication with parents is one of our major goals. Frequently check the information posted on the lobby and on this website. If you would like to discuss your dancer's progress or any situation that concerns you, please call or e-mail your dance teacher for an **appointment**.

# Dancer Handbook

## Dear Dancers,

Please take the time to read through the following. It explains many things you will need to know about studying at MSDE.

## Our Class Placement Policy

Class placement is very important to us at MSDE. Every year we create a schedule and syllabus based on the students that are enrolled. Some of the factors included are age, ability, quality and level of previous training, number of classes taken, respect, attendance, ability to apply corrections, strength, technical mastery, and goals. Do not compare yourself with other students. We place you where is right for YOU. Age and school grade is merely a guide for placement, NOT an absolute.

Ballet dancers repeat the same exercises day after day. Take comfort knowing that even professional dancers start their classes with plies--just like you! Working and practicing on the basics of technique is essential to being a proficient and healthy, strong dancer. Whatever level a student is placed is not necessarily a reflection of desire or talent. It is about following the progression of a ballet syllabus that ensures each dancer receives every aspect of training, and the training necessary for muscle and physical development. Some classes may be slow, this is not meant as punishment or to hold back. In fact, slower exercises should feel harder as you have to be able to move in a slow and controlled manner in order to move fast! This ability makes a better and more aware dancer! Keep focusing on all the exciting new steps you will be learning when you are ready, and how beautifully and correctly you will be able to do them!

Moving through level rankings before a dancer is ready could lead to injuries or bad habits and could actually slow down one's progression as a dancer. On occasion, some students advance to a higher level than the age range assigned admits. That means they are ready for a challenge or their physical development might be further along. This does not mean they are "better." Do keep in mind though, taking more classes per week and dancing more hours will strengthen dancers more quickly and they tend to master the syllabus that the teacher sets faster!

If you or your parents feel that you are not in the right class, we are very happy to discuss this with you. We understand that not all of our students are seeking a professional career in dance, while others may be striving for this goal. Our teachers strive to give the same amount of attention, love, and care to ALL dancers, regardless of overall goals. We give every dancer the attention they deserve and the education to understand quality training and technique. That's why it's so important that they are placed in the right level. There is a reason behind why we place our dancers where!

## Attendance

The Madison Studio regards regular, punctual class attendance as an example of the discipline that quality dance requires. Regular class activity greatly enhances technique, flexibility, strength, progress and memory development. Because we customize each dance group's regimen to accommodate the skill levels of each class and set choreography for the

class members of each particular group, no credits can be given for missed lessons. Absences, however, may be made up in similar skill or age classes.

Private lessons do not make up for class attendance and should not be treated as such. Private lessons are meant to delve into specific technique and artistic traits for the individual dancer.

Regular attendance is expected and rewarded. If you will be absent, a courtesy phone call or e-mail is appreciated. If you have been absent, please don't expect the teacher and class to go over again any new material/choreography that was presented earlier. Keep in mind you may not be placed in every combination within a piece if your attendance is sporadic. Get with a fellow classmate and ask what you missed. You will gain so much –the teacher will know you are responsible and self-disciplined. You, of course, should feel secure here to ask questions regarding details, “how-to”, sequencing, etc., but do take responsibility for your own learning.

### **Dress Code**

Proper dress is absolutely imperative to your training. Leotards and tights allow you to move freely and safely. It also allows you and your teachers to see how your muscles are working and if you are using them correctly. Wear the color leotard associated with your level assigned at the beginning of each year. Black or matching colored skirts with the associated level leotard color are allowed in class.

Girls with long hair: learn how to make a ballet bun, not just a ponytail! Your hair must be tied back from your face. You will not be allowed to do turns in class unless your hair is in a bun. Legwarmers and/or dance sweaters may be worn when it is very cold, t-shirts or sweatshirts are not allowed. If you are taking a pointe class, tape your toes before class! Practice tying your ribbons at home so you don't take too much class time.

We feel very strongly about the importance of our dress code. By coming to class in the appropriate uniform, you show your pride in our studio and your respectfulness towards your teachers and the art of ballet.

### **Make-up, Hair, and Jewelry**

For performances, recitals and photo sessions, dancers need stage make-up, (heavier than street wear) to make them more visible to the audience and video/DVD. For more information on stage makeup, see Ms. Faith for a write up.

Hair **MUST** be sleek, preferably in a bun, or whatever the individual instructor needs for their particular class and choreography. Buns are easier if styled with slightly damp hair, lots of gel & spray. Make a ponytail, then twist the hair and circle it around the elastic. Using a hairnet secures the hair, twisted after covering, then cover the bun a second time and circle hairpins (better than bobby pins) around the bun. Contour clips (the elongated triangle clips that pop open and press flat against the head to close work well for whispies (they are easily found at Kroger, Rite-Aid, Wal-Mart, etc.) and help secure any headpieces.

### **Class Arrival**

Studio doors open 10 minutes before the first class of the day. Older dancers, you are expected to come stretched and ready to dance! It maximizes your rotation, and ability to feel your muscles! Class times are **NOT** arrival times!

Students should wait in the lobby until their teacher indicates entrance to the studio. Studios not in use cannot be used by students waiting for their classes to begin, parents, siblings or friends - please be comfortable in our lobby.

## **Classroom Etiquette**

As many of you know, ballet started in the royal courts in France. You can imagine that manners were very important back then, and they are still central to any ballet class. The only way to learn is to be present and respectful of yourself, your teacher, and your classmates. Here are some things to remember:

Please arrive at the Studio in time to prepare for class, for upper levels HAVE YOUR SHOES ON before entering class. Pre-Dance through Level 3 may put their shoes on in the studio to learn the process together. The beginning of class is IMPERATIVE for you to warm up your muscles correctly and properly. If you are late for any reason, please wait outside the door until the exercise is finished, then go in quietly and stand at the nearest spot to the door. Levels 4A/B-8, if we are in the middle of barre, you are expected to do plies and tendus on your own quietly, and then join in on the rest of class.

Don't talk during class unless appropriate. If you have a question for the teacher, raise your hand. Pay attention while others are dancing or being corrected. This is one of the best ways for you to learn.

Please use the bathroom before class begins. You may bring a water bottle into the classroom. No gum- it is a choking hazard.

Don't sit on the floor in between exercises unless the teacher tells you. This helps build leg strength and focus—but of course if dancers need a break, teachers will allow.

If you are visiting a class, please be respectful of the dancers actually placed in that level. If you are older visiting a younger class, please be an example. If you are younger visiting an older class, use the experience as an opportunity to focus on details and reinforce what you've already learned.

It is a custom to thank your teacher, one by one, at the end of class with a small curtsy or bow.

Give your best effort with a positive attitude.

## **MSDE Code of Conduct**

The aim of MSDE is to ensure that all students experience dance in an enjoyable, respectful, happy, friendly, inclusive, supportive, and safe environment. We are a community of empowerment. Teachers, staff, parents, and students will do everything they can to create and preserve a constructive and emotionally and physically safe environment. At MSDE, bullying is not tolerated. Bullying refers to verbal acts, physical acts, or other acts of harassment in classes, rehearsals, performances or anywhere in and around the studio or in a theater.

Some examples of specific behaviors that constitute bullying include:

Spreading rumors or posting degrading, harmful, or explicit pictures, messages, or information using social media or other forms of electronic communication, (also known as cyber-bullying).

Name-calling, joking, or making offensive remarks about a person's religion, race, gender, ethnicity, or socioeconomic status. Whispers, eye-rolling, or backhanded comments are not tolerated.

Disrupting class or rehearsal with inappropriate conversation or comments. If witnessed by a staff member, the behavior will be addressed immediately

If any student at any time while at MSDE or while participating in a Studio performance feels that there is any action that feels less than "team-ly" they should speak with one of the Directors immediately. If a teacher sees any behavior that is associated with "meanness" or disrespect towards the staff or a fellow student, they will be asked to leave class for that day and have a meeting with the parent.

These are the expectations we have set for our students, but also require it from our parents as well. We are all a part of our dance family and our dancers succeed when they are supported from all areas.

Depending on the severity of the intolerance, MSDE reserves the right to require a conference with the students and parents, suspension from class, being prohibited from performing in studio productions, and in the most drastic instances, expulsion from the school.

The Madison Studio of Dance Education loves and cares for the students and families that trust us to offer the Middle Georgia Community an opportunity for a quality and well-rounded dance education. While we take that responsibility very seriously, we also believe in being a light for the community. Dance makes this world a more beautiful place and we aim to do this by teaching respect, teamwork, care, hard work, love, success, the positives of a challenge, and empowerment, amongst many other things. If our dancers carry these characteristics with them in the studio and on stage, they will do so in everyday life and in our community as well. Let's make this world a more beautiful place together!