

Rules and Guidelines

All classes are broken into levels for each student's benefit. Please take a moment to read the rules and guidelines, so that you will have a better understanding of our placement requirements and other aspects of the school.

- **Class Placement** - Class placement is the teacher's/director's decision. After all, that's what he/she is trained to do. We cannot stress enough that each child is unique and is at a different level. For this reason, they do not progress at the same rate and at the same time. What is important is that they master the fundamentals at their current level before they move forward. In addition, dance teachers know from experience that some children progress faster as part of the "top half" of a class, while others progress faster in the "bottom/younger/newer" half of a class. Unlike academics, where progress can sometimes be measured with a score or a grade, dance progress cannot be measured as simply. There are many factors that cannot be judged by the untrained eye - flexibility, natural ability for movement, the speed at which a dancer picks up choreography, his/her ear for music and beat, his/her performance quality, command of a room or stage, and also the actual skill level & step vocabulary he or she possesses. Many students "know" many steps, but do not yet have the technique or musicality to execute them with style, which is key in dance. (In other words, we don't just move dancers "up" because they "know" or "can do the step." We base our decisions as much, if not more, on the quality of how it is executed - whether it can be done in combination, with style, and with control.) These are the things that make dance an art, not just a sport.
- **Professional Judgement** - The teacher's judgement must be respected first and foremost. It is normal for every parent to view his or her child as "the best dancer in the class", but remember, the teacher is looking at your child through trained, expert eyes. If your teacher's judgement is not respected in all areas of your child's dance training, your child should not be studying with him or her!
- **Other Considerations** - The number of times a student studies per week, and his/her attendance may also have an important influence on how quickly he or she progresses. For instance, a student who has studied jazz dancing for five years on a once a week basis may find himself/herself in a class with a student who has studied jazz for only one or two years but has also been taking ballet and tap classes. Naturally, the second student has been dancing more intensively and this will tend to speed up progress. On the other hand, there are limits to how many classes dancers should take. Even with intensive- level dancers who push their bodies to accomplish many difficult skills, it is important to have AT LEAST two free days during the week with no classes to avoid physical and/or psychological burnout or injury. We sometimes find that many students who have taken ballet for several years are usually able to work at a higher level in tap and jazz than those that have had little or no ballet training. This is because ballet encompasses all the fundamentals of dance movement.

- Proper attire must be worn with hair pulled back off of the face to all classes. Jewelry should not be worn to class.
 - Ballet – Leotard with tights and ballet slippers. Hair should be in a neat bun. Leg warmers and ballet skirts are allowed.
 - Jazz & Hip-hop – Leotard with tights or a dance shirt with jazz pants and jazz shoes.
 - Musical Theater – Loose clothes (no jeans!) and black jazz shoes.
 - Tap – Leotard with tights or a dance shirt with jazz pants and tap shoes.
- No drinks other than water are allowed in the studio at any time! Food is not allowed in the studio at any time! There is no longer a water fountain at the West Caldwell studio- students are encouraged to bring bottled water.
- Tuition is to be paid on a monthly or quarterly basis, due on the **first week** of the month. A \$10 late fee will be assessed after the first week.
- Missed classes should be made up at your earliest convenience. Available make-up times will be given upon request. **There are no refunds or pro-rating for missed classes.**
- Attendance and punctuality are extremely important. Class time is limited and latecomers disrupt the entire class. Please be on time to all classes. Missed classes will affect your child’s performance and overall class progress. Poor class attendance and repeated tardiness may result in reevaluation of the student’s and parent’s commitment to the class and/or show participation.
- Any questions or concerns should be brought to the artistic director’s attention. Please do not direct your questions to the teaching staff.
- The policies and rules may be changed from time to time and will be posted on the school’s website. All parents and students are responsible for knowing and adhering to the rules and policies of the school. Advanced written notice will be given to all parents and students when any changes are made.

(Signature of Parent/Guardian)

(Date)