

DANCE EXPRESSIONS

2023-2024 Policy Handbook



Welcome to **Dance Expressions** where each and every dancer is an important member of our studio. We believe dancers should be taught in a safe, nurturing, and positive environment that helps promote emotional and physical growth.

Below you will find important information regarding our studio, classes and policies. Please take a moment to carefully review the information with your dancer and keep it handy for future reference. We would also like for you to sign and return the last page of our rules and policies handbook.

We look forward to sharing this special year of dance with you and your family. At Dance Expressions you will experience how much fun dance can be and all the joy that comes along with it! Let's dance!

FOR OUR STUDENTS The first step to becoming a successful dancer is making a solid commitment to your classes. Strong technique is a key ingredient and class is where you develop that technique. Come to each class each week prepared to learn and without personal distractions. Class time is your chance to focus on yourself; true progress is made when you look at each class as an opportunity to become better at what you love to do. Dance full out, stretch a little further, become more aware, and make the most of every class!

Respect for the teacher is essential. Listen to each correction given, whether it's directed at you or another dancer. A correction is an honor; it shows how much a teacher cares about your progress as a dancer. Always say thank you when your teacher offers you constructive criticism. Nothing can stop those students who apply themselves in every class and appreciate their teachers' knowledge and experience.

FOR THE PARENTS We believe that a child's success depends on the support of their parents or guardians. Because your commitment to the process makes an enormous difference, we encourage you to support your child's dance education. Your child's presence at all classes is imperative. The spirit and the lesson of dedication are a big part of our dance program's learning process.

No two students will progress at the same rate, even if they experience the exact same training. It is important to encourage children to focus on themselves, give their all, and be satisfied with their own accomplishments. Making negative comparisons distracts children from focusing on their own dancing experience. In addition, speaking negatively about your child's teachers, fellow students, or other

students can result in children imitating this behavior with others. Please refrain from this negative behavior and help us keep our studio a place where everyone feels accepted and welcome.

Class Placement: When it comes to class placement we take a lot of time accessing the dancer on skill, maturity, strength, technique, and their understanding of the class material. Remember, the general number of years per level is 3-4 years. Keep in mind that each student progresses at a different rate based on many factors including the number of years they have danced, class attendance, and whether or not they practice at home. We don't want anyone intimidated by the class work and the speed at which the higher level is taught. In the upper levels, students must have mastered the material in previous levels so we do not have to continuously review what they should already know. It isn't fair for current students to slow down the class pace for new students who aren't prepared. Understand that we are concerned about the well being of every child who enters our studio. When a dancer moves into a level they are not prepared for, they will struggle. When parents and dancers understand this and dancers stick to the appropriate levels they will become more focused and stronger dancers. Your child worked hard and did a wonderful job last year. There is absolutely nothing wrong with being placed into the same level..it is a natural process in dance. It is not a repeat, the class will progress and continue to move forward. Your child will benefit both physically and artistically.

Staying in the Loop: Keeping you informed is one of our primary goals. Please read through all e-mails and all hand-outs that are sent home. Most of our contact is through e-mail, so please make sure you provide us with a current e-mail address. We work very hard to keep you informed; however, it is your responsibility to keep up to date by checking your e-mail on a regular basis.

Also, please make sure to keep your calendars updated with important dates (no class days, breaks, holidays, special events, performances, etc.) All of this information can be found on our website under the **Studio Calendar** tab.

If you would like to contact us, please send an e-mail to this address: danceexpressionsmp@gmail.com
Website: www.danceexpressions5678.com

Questions: Communication is extremely important to us. If you have any questions, please contact us directly. Talking only to other parents/students can lead to misinformation and confusion.

Also, as a reminder, we are an entity separate from the City of Menlo Park. We rent from the city and our classes are housed inside the recreation center, but we are not a city-run program. If you have any questions about classes, openings, attire, etc.. please make sure that these questions are coming to us directly and not the recreation center.

Facebook Page: Dance Expressions has a Facebook page! Check it out and don't forget to **LIKE** us!! We can be found at [Dance Expressions Menlo Park](#).

Instagram: Dance Expressions has an Instagram! Check it out and don't forget to **FOLLOW** us!! We can be found at [danceexpressionsmp](https://www.instagram.com/danceexpressionsmp).

Please invite your family and friends to "like" and "follow" Dance Expressions as well! Show your studio spirit!

Dance Standards and Policies

Registration Information: Students need to be registered by the second week of class. If they are not on the enrollment by then, they will not be able to participate in class until they are properly registered. Thank you for understanding the importance of this matter.

Referral Program: At Dance Expressions we have a Referral Program! We want to say a huge THANK YOU for referring Dance Expressions to your friends and neighbors! All current students who refer a student new to Dance Expressions, who registers and completes the session, will receive a \$25 gift card! Refer two friends who register and complete the session and earn a \$50 gift card! This is our way of saying "Thank You" for your endless support and dedication to Dance Expressions! We truly appreciate the confidence you have in our studio and our classes. *Note: Friends do not have to be the same age or be in the same class as the dancer who referred them. IMPORTANT - in order to receive the benefits of this program, you must let us know through email the friend you referred.

Referring a friend for the Fall Session:

To qualify for a gift card, friends must register between September 5 – September 30.

Referring a friend for the Winter Session:

To qualify for a gift card, friends must register between the time period of December 2023 – January 31.

All students who qualify for a gift card will be entered into a drawing for 3 free tickets to our annual end-of-the-year performance in June! Each qualifying referral equals one entry. The more friends you refer, the more chances you have to win!

Annual Studio Fee - Each family will be required to pay an annual \$30 non-refundable fee that will be due by the dancer's 2nd week of class. This is due from all families regardless of the dancer's start time - starting classes at the beginning of the year, a few weeks into the year, middle of the year, etc. Thank you for taking care of this in a timely manner.

Attendance/Absences: Our attendance policy is simple..you should always Attend-Dance! 😊

Students are expected to be in class each and every week. It is important that students attend all of their classes in order to benefit from their training. Absences or tardiness can have a negative effect on the entire class. When dancers miss class frequently, spacing and formations become very difficult to work on. It is very unfair to those who attend regularly and can result in frustration for the student and their teachers and classmates.

Make sure you notify the teacher in case of an absence. If a student is absent from class, they are responsible for learning the steps taught in the lesson missed.

Whether the student takes one class or many classes a week, the commitment is the same. We are hopeful that everyone will honor their commitment to their class (or classes) and complete the entire dance year. The quality of what you learn and how you perform in class and on stage will be a direct result of your yearly attendance. Each class is comprised of individual students who work together as a single unit or group to create this visual experience called dance. When group members are missing from class, this experience is diminished.

Good attendance = good performance!

Attire: We ask that students please wear the proper attire to class. All Students should arrive to the studio in clean dance clothing. No jeans will be permitted for any class. Hair needs to be pulled up away from the face and tightly secured – ponytails, braids, etc. Always remember deodorant.

Jazz – Form fitting tanks/t-shirts, leggings, jazz shorts, and black jazz shoes. No Baggy clothing.

Lyrical - Form fitting tanks/t-shirts, leggings, jazz shorts, and tan jazz shoes. No Baggy clothing

Hip Hop - Tanks/t-shirts, leggings, jazz shorts.. Nothing excessively baggy..and tennis shoes. For the end-of-the-year performance, a specific shoe will be required. TBA

Creative Cuties, Kinder Expressions, & Mini Jazz – Form fitting tanks/t-shirts, leggings, jazz shorts, dance skirts, and black jazz shoes. No long dresses or long skirts. Dancers may go barefoot in class, but will need black jazz shoes for the end-of-the-year performance.

Class Etiquette:

Bring a good attitude to class. We expect students to observe common courtesy and to be respectful of their teachers and fellow class members. Proper respect is expected at all times. We feel it is important that students learn to work efficiently as a group and behave in a respectable manner. There will be a wholesome, healthy, age-appropriate atmosphere at all times. A positive attitude and proper behavior is necessary to ensure a rewarding and productive dance class. Disrespect for teachers and other students, gossiping and other behaviors that adversely affect the class will not be tolerated. We love to teach and watch your children grow. Please help us continue our tradition of positive, constructive dance instruction by supporting us and your amazing children.

- ★ No food or drink in the dance room, besides water. No snacking during class time.
- ★ Cell phones are not to be used in class and should be turned off or on mute.
- ★ Profanity, unsportsmanlike conduct, gossip, and or slanderous remarks will not be tolerated. Positive energy only!
- ★ Keep hands off the mirrors.
- ★ No hanging on the barres.
- ★ Always use strong arms, stretched feet, proper body alignment and 100% of your energies during class.

And remember to smile, learn, and have fun in each class! ☺

Arrival & Dismissal: When entering & exiting the dance room, please be mindful of your surroundings. Loud noise from the lobby is very disruptive to the students in class, so we ask that everyone please be respectful of the noise levels. Also, if you decide to wait in the lobby during your child's class and have other children with you, please make sure they are not touch/hitting the viewing window. The noise is amplified in the dance room.

When dancers arrive for class, please wait in the lobby until your teacher opens the door and welcomes you into the dance room.

Class Observation: We appreciate our dance families and their support, but we ask parents to view their student's progress from the lobby. Please stand away from the viewing window if it is obvious the student is distracted. It is important for all students to remain focused while in the dance room. While class is in session, please do not open and close the dance room doors to communicate with your dancer, this is very distracting and will cause us to have to refocus the class.

No visitors are permitted in the dance room during class time.

Lost and Found: Please mark all dancewear, shoes, and personal items with your child's name. We will make every effort to locate and return lost items; however, we cannot be responsible for any items that your child brings to class.

Student and Parent Use of Social Media: Use of Facebook, Twitter, LinkedIn, Instagram, blogging and other social media outlets is commonplace. This policy is intended to provide parents and students guidelines for the use of social media regarding Dance Expressions. Please use discretion when posting on these sites.

- Never post anything that could compromise the self-esteem of students who attend Dance Expressions.
- Never post any negative comments about Dance Expressions, our teachers, our performances, and any events attended.
- If you post videos of class or rehearsals, don't post any choreography in its entirety.

If it is brought to our attention that there has been improper use of social media, you will be asked to remove the content. If this continues to be a problem, it may result in dismissal of the student.

No Solicitation Policy: Out of respect for Dance Expressions and what we have created, we ask that no student/parents of students currently taking classes at Dance Expressions and recently thereafter solicit/recruit or attempt to solicit/recruit Dance Expression's students and or parents for other instruction relating to dance. **Solicitation/Recruitment is unprofessional and unethical and will not be tolerated.**

End of the Year Show: This is the highlight of the year for our dancers. It's a chance to wow family and friends and show off all of their hard work.

This year's show will be held in June 2024 (exact dates TBA). As soon as the dates are finalized, we will share them with everyone.

Costumes: There is a separate costume fee that will be due in December. We order early to ensure that we will get costumes on time. There are no refunds once costumes are ordered. Fee will include costumes and a Dance Expressions t-shirt. If costumes need to be exchanged, there will be an exchange fee of \$15.

Rehearsals: As we get closer to our June performance, we will send out the rehearsal schedule. Rehearsals are held the week of the show. During this week there will be no regularly scheduled classes - the week of the show will not look like your child's regular weekly schedule. Students are expected to attend all rehearsals and stay for the duration of their scheduled time as this is the last chance to clean up, make changes, and polish the dances. One missing person can upset the balance of the spacing. If you are not present at rehearsal, there is a possibility that you will not be in certain parts of the dance.

Photos: Every now and then we like to post some photos/videos of our classes, performances, and general "studio life." These photos are used for advertising, Facebook, Instagram, and our website. Recitals are professionally recorded each year.

Notes for Parents:

- ★ Make sure you notify the teacher in case of an absence.
- ★ Please register on time.
- ★ Encourage practice at home
- ★ Check e-mails and the website for updates. www.danceexpressions5678.com
- ★ Please go over the policies with your children to help them understand why it is important for everyone to follow the rules.
- ★ Please remember we value you and your children and want to thank you for choosing us for your children's dance education

Code of Conduct

Students and parents will conduct themselves in an appropriate manner while at Dance Expressions and at all performances and events in which Dance Expressions is being represented. Proper respect for instructors is expected of all students, parents/guardians and siblings.

Attitudes that are disrespectful, uncooperative, or aggressive do not have a place at Dance Expressions.

Students will not speak negatively about one another or the teachers.

Any parent/guardian or student who disrupts class or approaches a teacher, another student or parent with the intent to cause dissent or contravene the policies and procedures of Dance Expressions will be dismissed immediately.

Any inappropriate or slanderous remarks about Dance Expressions face to face or on any social media site will be cause for immediate dismissal from the studio.

Thank you so much for your support. We are looking forward to another fantastic dance year!

Please fill out and return this page by e-mail. 😊

BY SIGNING BELOW, I ACKNOWLEDGE I HAVE RECEIVED AND READ THE ABOVE INFORMATION and understand the policies and procedures of Dance Expressions. I agree to adhere to all the rules and regulations asked of myself and my child.

Parent Signature: _____ Date: _____

Student Signature: _____ Date: _____

**No student signature required for students pre-school through 2nd grade. **

Current Parent E-mail: _____

Current Student E-mail: _____

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