

Wilmington  
*Conservatory*  
of fine arts  
dance.music.art.theatre

# PARENT & STUDENT HANDBOOK

2023-2024



Welcome to WCFA's 16th season!

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## -Our WCFA Mission-

*The Wilmington Conservatory of Fine Arts* is committed to enriching the lives of children of all ages, races, and abilities with quality instruction and excellence in training in the fine arts. Our certified, professional faculty instruct fine arts classes in dance, music, theatre, and visual arts for ages 5 months-adult, Beginner to pre-professional. We are pleased to be offering instruction in Classical ballet, pointe/variations, modern, contemporary, Hip-Hop, jazz, tap, acro, and dance. We are the only studio in the region with certified Progressing Ballet Technique® classes and Music Mover and creative movement classes. We offer art and design, music, theatre and Adult classes as well.

The Wilmington Conservatory of Fine Arts (WCFA) is recognized as a chapter of the National Honor Society for Dance Arts (NHSDA) through its membership of the National Dance Education Organization. WCFA is the only studio/school to offer this program in our region. This program will benefit our high school students by recognizing their dance education as part of their academics and provide accolades that may be referenced for higher education endeavors. WCFA holds a high standard of training and we believe this program will reflect the accountability, importance, and experience that our students receive as part of a well rounded education.

Residency of the nonprofit Christian ministry of Turning Pointe Dance Company.

Arts in excellence for everyone!



For more information and updates, please visit  
[wilmingtonconservatory.com](http://wilmingtonconservatory.com)  
or call our office  
910-240-2222



-Conservatory-

Webster's dictionary defines *conservatory* as a home for foundlings—a school specializing in one of the fine arts.

To guard, observe, to keep safe and/or sound.

# Welcome!



Welcome to the Wilmington Conservatory of Fine Arts! Whether you are a new or a returning student, we are honored that you will be a part of our sixteenth season! We believe in creating a strong foundation of training in the fundamentals of the fine arts and we strive to build upon these time tested concepts and traditions while offering a warm family environment. We began as a small studio with a big dream but have grown now to serve hundreds of students over the years. Former students have gone on to dance professionally, become dance

instructors, and even opened their own studios. As we begin this semester we kindly ask you to please review this handbook and all our policies. Be sure you are signed up for the studio email newsletter and WCFA Mobile App that sends important information about current events. Visit our website at [wilmingtonconservatory.com](http://wilmingtonconservatory.com) for additional information.

Please follow us on social media and share our posts with your friends! WCFA is a studio with a big heart a place where we know every child's name and have the opportunity to watch them grow and flourish - that is the legacy of the Wilmington Conservatory family!

## Financial Policies

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### *Yearly Fees*

A registration fee is required to secure a student's space in class. WCFA offers a family discount of 10% off for additional siblings.

### *Payment Policies*

- Tuition is auto drafted at the beginning of the month through our online software, Jack Rabbit, used in student registration. Please be sure credit card information is up to date and current by logging into your portal that was set up at once registered. There is a fee of \$30 for insufficient funds.

Withdrawal: If it becomes necessary to withdraw your child from dance, you MUST notify (WCFA) in writing 30 days in advance or submit to the office via email. Withdrawal cannot be done by phone call or through a third party. Notification of withdrawal before the first of the month will release you from any future tuition commitment. The full month's tuition will be required if withdrawal notification occurs after the first of the month.

- Student accounts must be paid in full for students to participate in Winter and Spring performances.
- Class Cancellation: A minimum of 5 students is required for a class to continue. Should a class drop below 4 students anytime during the academic year, we will work with the parents to find a suitable class within the same level.
- Refunds: The registration fee is non-refundable. In the event a student is unable to continue classes due to medical reasons or if a student's family moves, please contact the faculty of WCFA to discuss the account. If a class must be canceled due to low enrollment and we cannot place the student in another class, any credit balance will be refunded. Costume fees will only be refunded if costumes have not been ordered.

# Policies & Procedures

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## *Attendance*

We encourage you to stress the importance of NOT MISSING CLASSES unless there is an emergency or illness. Regular consistent attendance is important as well as arriving on time. The progress of the entire class is hindered when class must be stopped to re-teach what was missed at an earlier session. If a student is behind in choreography or technique in general, we would recommend a private lesson with the teacher. Please contact our office for pricing and scheduling a private lesson. We have also found that when a student feels a lack of confidence in his/her class work due to inadequate preparation, they become discouraged with their dancing in general. For WCFA's advanced levels: if classes/rehearsals are missed without prior notification and agreement of the Director, then it will be up to the discretion of the choreographer and Director whether a dancer will be removed from the choreography. If an advanced student arrives more than 20 minutes past the beginning of class or rehearsal time the student will need to observe and take notes due to safety and etiquette studio etiquette training. If a student will knowingly miss class due to illness, an activity, or appointment, he/she should notify the Front Desk staff prior to class. Leaving a voice mail or email will be sufficient. Notification of the absence will be given to the teacher. Advanced students MUST call the office if they are going to be absent.

## *Make-up Policy*

All students can make up a missed class in any class of the same level or a level below. Please see the schedule of classes for days and times and consult with your student's teacher for a recommendation.

## *Inclement Weather/Closures*

Wilmington Conservatory of Fine Arts is closed for inclement weather or closings when New Hanover County Schools are closed. Please pay attention to school closing reports. Studio closings will be announced through email, social media, and our WCFA mobile app.

## *Performances*

WCFA is renowned for our spectacular and professional productions at the Wilson Center in downtown Wilmington. The Winter Concert and end of school year Spring Concert are considered a priority for all our students and other conflicting events should be secondary to preparations for these programs. The end of the year performance in June is for all levels from Pre-ballet through Company as well as Theatre. The Spring performance showcases the technique the students have learned throughout the year.

## *Studio Updates/Newsletter and Mobile App*

- WCFA will regularly send out email newsletters for updates with important notices and helpful information. Please make sure that you are signed up to receive our newsletters through our website! It is helpful to add our email to your address book to avoid important information going to your spam.
- We may also post important announcements on the message board through our WCFA Mobile App that is available for download on the google play store and Apple App store. The Wilmington Conservatory app was designed to be an easy-to-use, on-the-go way to access everything WCFA has to offer right from your smartphone.

We highly recommend downloading this resource if you currently have a student enrolled with the Wilmington Conservatory of Fine Arts.



# Advancement from Level to Level

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## ***Level Advancement Policies***

*It may be appropriate for dance students to remain in the same class level for two or three years before continuing on to the next level.*



Unlike academic studies where a student progresses a grade level each year, in dance training it is quite normal to spend several years in one level in order to properly assimilate all the necessary material. The training of a dancer is based on the constant repetition of particular steps and movements until the student has a full comprehension of the dance vocabulary and shows competency of execution. Sometimes, especially in younger children, total comprehension

can only be achieved when the physical body has grown strong enough to handle the more complicated moves required in dance. In these instances, we prefer to wait until a child's physical development matches the requirements of the next level's syllabus. We offer summer classes and intensives to help our students retain what they have learned throughout the academic year and to work on technique development. It is important to maintain consistent attendance in dance classes throughout the year. This ensures the progress of each student in their given class level. Similar to any sport requiring difficult motor skills and dexterity of movement, disciplined and regular practice will lead to quicker advancement. We hope this information will enable parents and students to better understand the actual timeline of development in a dancer's training and that there is nothing unusual about the gradual advancement from level to level.

## ***When Can Your Student Go On Pointe?***

It is advisable to be cautious and conservative about the age at which a female student begins training on pointe. Usually, by age 11 or 12 and after 3-4 years of consecutive ballet training as well as training through Progressing Ballet Technique® the student is physically strong enough and technically advanced enough to begin pointe work. It can be dangerous to start a student on pointe too early in the process of her training. The student must have a thorough understanding of proper body alignment as well as ankle, foot, leg, and abdominal strength to prevent injury or the development of chronic conditions such as tendonitis. A student who begins pointe work too early may also develop bad habits in an effort to stand on pointe when they are not strong enough to



do it properly. There is no urgency to start pointe work at an early age as the accomplished and well trained dancer easily goes up on pointe with little effort and is able to progress at a rapid pace. Many students who start pointe work too early are then discouraged by the difficulty of proper execution which they did not anticipate. It is much wiser to wait until the appropriate time when the student is physically ready and can achieve the anticipated results.



# Student Guidelines and Etiquette

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## *What is Classroom Etiquette*

- Classical ballet technique and its vocabulary have been established for hundreds of years and, as such, the traditions of classical ballet are very solid. These traditions extend not only to movement, but to the discipline and etiquette of class work as well.
- A good dance class by nature must command respect for the instructor and for the art and for others. This implies such courtesies as not slouching at the barre or in center as the instructor sets a combination, beginning and ending a classroom exercise sustained, poised position of readiness, arriving at class wearing class code and hair neatly arranged, and curtsying or bowing to the instructor at the end of class. Attention to these disciplines often carries over and adds precision and clarity to a student's academic work.
- Our faculty have many years of training and experience. They are passionate about their art and care deeply about their students. It is never appropriate to publicly contradict or talk over an Instructor. If you have a question or a disagreement, please stay after class and speak to the Instructor privately.
- Listen actively and attentively in class. Do not turn your back while someone is demonstrating or speaking. Do not speak when the teacher is speaking or others are dancing. Show that you are engaged by standing tall and keeping your eyes on the teacher or demonstrator. Do not cross your arms across your chest, stare at yourself in the mirror, yawn, fidget, look bored or tired, practice fouettés, etc.
- Do not correct another dancer unless they specifically ask for your opinion or advice. Only the Instructor and their officially appointed assistant(s) may correct a dancer. It is not appropriate for students to correct other students.
- Respect for faculty and student belongings is expected at all times.
- Stealing, misuse, and disrespect will not be tolerated.




## *No Tolerance Policies/Bullying and Drug and Alcohol Use*

- The Wilmington Conservatory of Fine Arts will not tolerate bullying in any form, whether physical, social, emotional, in person, or on social media. We define bullying as any behavior physical, verbal, written either electronically or in person, that detrimentally targets another dancer. This counts as bullying when it physically or emotionally harms a dancer, targets a dancer for any actual or perceived characteristic, or creates a hostile environment in the dance studio.
- The WCFA will not tolerate the abuse and usage of drugs and alcohol on our premises or performing venue locations, nor allow students or parents under the influence on premises for the safety of our students and staff. Such actions may result in termination or suspension.
- It is not acceptable for parents or guardians to harass another parent, student, or faculty/staff member. Such actions may result in the termination or suspension of the student whose parent is engaging in bullying behavior.
- Students taking virtual or in person classes are not allowed to take screenshots or recordings of the classes for the safety and privacy of other classmates and the instructor without prior permission.
- If you feel that you have been a victim of bullying, please contact the Director, Cory Smith. You can also leave a note in the mailbox by the front desk. NC General Statute has served as a guideline in forming our no bullying policy. For more information on bullying, check out the Parent's Page on [StompOutBullying.org](http://StompOutBullying.org).

# Preparation for Class

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- Students should wait quietly for their class to begin.
  - Students should go to the bathroom before class.
  - Students 20 or more minutes late may be asked to observe class to protect them from physical injury.
  - Students late for class should wait at the door for the instructor to acknowledge and invite them to join the class.
  - Students are not allowed in the classroom unless a faculty/ staff member is present or has given permission.
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- No chewing gum, food, or drink other than water the classrooms.
  - Be aware! We have students with life threatening peanut allergies at WCFA.
  - If you have a serious allergy and carry an epipen, make sure that you pick an Epi-buddy. Let a friend or teacher know where you have your epipen stored in your dance bag so that we can grab it quickly if you need help.
  - Students are expected to adhere to each instructor's expectations at all times. Universal dance class etiquette does not allow for students to sit down during class unless invited by teacher, hang on barres, talk during class, or leave class without permission.
  - No jewelry, watches, etc. in class.
  - Proper hair and dress code should be observed at all times.
  - Students and their siblings are not permitted to run, play, or make excessive noise in the lobby.
  - Students are expected to keep the facilities clean by picking up after themselves and throwing away all trash.
  - Dancers in pointe shoes are required to dispose of all Band-Aids, wrappers, tape, and lamb's wool.
  - Absolutely no street shoes are allowed on dance studio floors to prevent flooring damage

# At Home Injury Prevention

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## ***Stretch Accountability Chart***

We ask that students keep track of the stretching they are doing at home with the Stretch Accountability Chart. The chart will be a great reminder for students to not only stretch those splits, but to also take care of their muscles after dancing. Stretching their muscles is crucial in preventing injuries and we want to see everyone as happy and healthy as possible. Parents should initialize next to each day after the student has completed their stretches and have them bring it back into ballet class each week.

# Parent Guidelines

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- Please review the Student Guidelines with your child to support and endorse their importance.
- We expect our students to be prompt for class. Your cooperation is greatly appreciated. In the event you are late, please do not interrupt the class to give an explanation. The instructor will request an excuse if one is deemed necessary.
- Please call/email ahead of time if you know your child is going to be absent from class.
- Please encourage students to go to the bathroom before class.
- Good nutrition is essential for a dancer's physical and mental health. Please keep this in mind when planning snacks and meals. Please be aware that some of our students have nut allergies.
- Pack water! Students will need 1-2 bottles of water per class day.
- Students under age 10 will not be allowed to leave the studio at any time without a parent or guardian. Parents and caregivers must come into the studio to pick up their child. Teenage students are not allowed to cross the street to stores and restaurants without a note from the parents to Faculty/Staff informing us of their permission. Thank you for helping us keep our students safe!
- All dance students are expected to follow our dress code at all times with proper shoes, attire, and hair. \*see dress code
- Parents are not allowed backstage during performances and rehearsals at the Wilson Center for the security and privacy of our dancers. We have an experienced and trusted staff and faculty that helps our dancers with costume changes and transitions between Acts. This also enables our staff to solely focus on the well being of our dancers while backstage.
- Faculty phone numbers, addresses, or emails will not be given out to students or parents from the Front Desk for the privacy of our Faculty/Staff.
- Be aware that between classes is not generally a good time to have a discussion with the Director or the faculty because they are trying to focus on their students and transition into the next class. We really value the input of our families so if there is something you would like to talk to our Director or a faculty member about we ask you to please schedule a meeting so that we can give you our full attention. Quick exchanges and greetings are terrific between classes but we encourage you to schedule a meeting for longer discussions. Thank you for your help!





# Dress Code/Classroom Attire

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*Our online store is linked on the WCFA's website under Store with all updated dance wear dress code for WCFA Students.*

- A dancer's attire greatly determines the attitude toward his/her class work, and therefore we require that the standard of appropriate neatness be observed at all times both in the studio and in virtual classes. The teacher may not allow class participation by a student who regularly neglects this requirement.
- Cover-ups are required. With respect to our facilities and to each other, we require that ALL DANCERS WEAR COVER-UPS when coming and going from the building beyond the classroom.
- No underwear should be worn under tights. Both the tights and leotards have cotton-lined panels. They can be compared to wearing a bathing suit.
- All ballet shoes should be properly sewn and drawstrings should be cut and tucked into the shoe.
- Please write the student's name in all dance wear including each shoe.
- Students may wear stud or small earrings. These are the only permissible jewelry to be worn in class. Watches, necklaces, large rings, and bracelets are potentially hazardous. No jewelry is allowed for performances unless required as part of an assigned costume.



## **Shoes: The Dancer's Tools**

Do not wear dance shoes outside! Oils and dirt are hazardous when tracked into the studios and are damaging to the shoe. Shoes must fit properly. They fit snugly and are not fitted with room to grow. Toenails should be cut short and straight across to avoid sore nails.

## **Pointe Shoe Guidelines: Pointe Students**



- Do not purchase pointe shoes before consulting your teachers.
  - Do not sew ribbons or elastic onto shoes until the faculty confirms the fit and gives instructions on how to sew them.
  - Experienced dancers should pre-tape their toes prior to technique class to limit the amount of time taken to put on pointe shoes for pointe class.
  - Split sole tights must cover the entire foot for pointe. Mid-calf tights are not appropriate for pointe technique class.
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- Dancers should learn to sew their own shoes. This is their responsibility not their parents'. If they are ready for pointe, they're ready to sew! Precisely follow the faculty's recommendations on how to protect the toes. Do not purchase toe pads or adapt professional techniques for wrapping, taping, or padding the toes. These measures are sometimes more hazardous than helpful for the foot. This is a learning process as the dancer develops and should only be advised and overseen by faculty.
  - Each dancer must dispose of her own band-aids, wrappers, discarded tape, and lamb's wool to ensure cleanliness and a healthy workspace.
  - Follow the instructions of the faculty for the care, longevity techniques, and storage of pointe shoes.

# Wilmington Conservatory of Fine Arts

## Tuition and Fees 2023-2024

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### **Fees & Policies**

- ❖ Registration Fee per academic year: \$35.00 (No registration fee for Adult classes)
  - ❖ Nutcracker Performance/Costume Fee due September 1st.  
*PreBallet-Level 3 \$100, Levels 4-5 \$150, and Apprentice and Company \$200.*
  - ❖ End of Year Production Performance/Costume Fee due February 1st .  
PreBallet-Level 2 \$100, Levels 3 - \$125, Levels 4-5 \$150, and Apprentice and Company \$200.
  - ❖ Each Level is required to wear dress code class attire.  
Please click on the Store tab on our website [www.WilmingtonConservatory.com](http://www.WilmingtonConservatory.com) to be directed to the online store.
  - ❖ Discounts and Fees: 10% off for each add'l sibling.  
\$30 fee for returned checks or declined cards.
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### **Class & Level Fees**

- ❖ Piano, voice, and private lessons are priced by the instructor and vary depending on the class.
- ❖ Homeschool Ballet: \$75/month
- ❖ Art Class: \$75/month plus art supplies (Included in Unlimited Fee)
- ❖ Theatre class: \$75/month (Included in Unlimited Fee)
- ❖ Music Movers: \$75/month
- ❖ Beg/Int Teen Ballet: \$75/month
- ❖ Creative Movement: \$75/month
- ❖ Pre Ballet, Tap, & Tumble: \$85/month
- ❖ Level 1 Ballet, Tap, & Tumble: \$95/month
- ❖ Level 2 Ballet, Tap, & Tumble: \$110/month
- ❖ Level 3 Ballet, Tap, and Jazz : \$130/month
- ❖ Level 4 Core Level Fee of \$250 includes:  
*Ballet, Modern, Progressing Ballet Technique®, & Tap*
- ❖ Level 4 Unlimited Level Fee of \$275/month includes Core classes and additionally:  
*Jazz, Contemporary, Acro, Saturday Ballet, & Hip Hop*
- ❖ Level 5 Core Level Fee of \$275/month includes  
*Ballet, Modern, Progressing Ballet Technique®, Contemporary, & Tap*
- ❖ Level 5 Unlimited Level Fee of \$300 includes all Core classes and additionally  
*Jazz, Contemporary, Acro, Saturday ballet, Hip Hop, & Theatre*
- ❖ Apprentice Unlimited Level Fee of \$350/month includes all Core classes and additionally: *Jazz, Contemporary, Acro, Saturday Ballet, Hip Hop, & Theatre*
- ❖ Company Unlimited Level Fee of \$385/month has access to all techniques every day
- ❖ Adult Classes: \$20/per drop-in session or \$75/month for Ballet

Is there a class that you are interested in that we are not offering Let us know! If five or more students sign up, we may be able to offer the class.



## **WCFA Calendar 2023-2024**

August 21st - Fall schedule begins

September 1st - Nutcracker performance fees due

September 4th - Studio closed for observance of Labor Day

September 25-29th - Bring a friend to class week

October 23-27th - Costume week - Wear your favorite costume!

November 22-26th - Studio closed for Thanksgiving Holiday

December 2nd - Nutcracker Tea Party Fundraiser

December 11-14th - In-Studio Rehearsal for Nutcracker

December 15th - Tech Rehearsal for Nutcracker

December 16-17th - Nutcracker at the Wilson Center

December 18-January 1st - Studio closed for Winter break

January 2- Spring semester begins

January 15th - Studio closed for MLK day

January 22-26th - Bring a friend to class

February 12-16th - Bring a Sweetheart to class week

March 1-3rd- Advanced levels attend UNCSA

March 18-22nd - WCFA spirit week! Wear your WCFA apparel or costumes to show school spirit

May 27th - Studio closed in observance of Memorial Day

March 29-April 7th - Studio closed for Spring Break

June 3-6th - In-Studio Rehearsal week Dress Rehearsal

June 7th - Wilson Center Tech

Jun 8-9th - Wilson Center Spring Performances

June 10-16 - WCFA closed

June 17-21st - Summer Camp Week One

June 24-28th - June Technique Intensive

July 2-25th - July Camps and Classes

July 29- August 2th - Technique Intensive and Placement Auditions