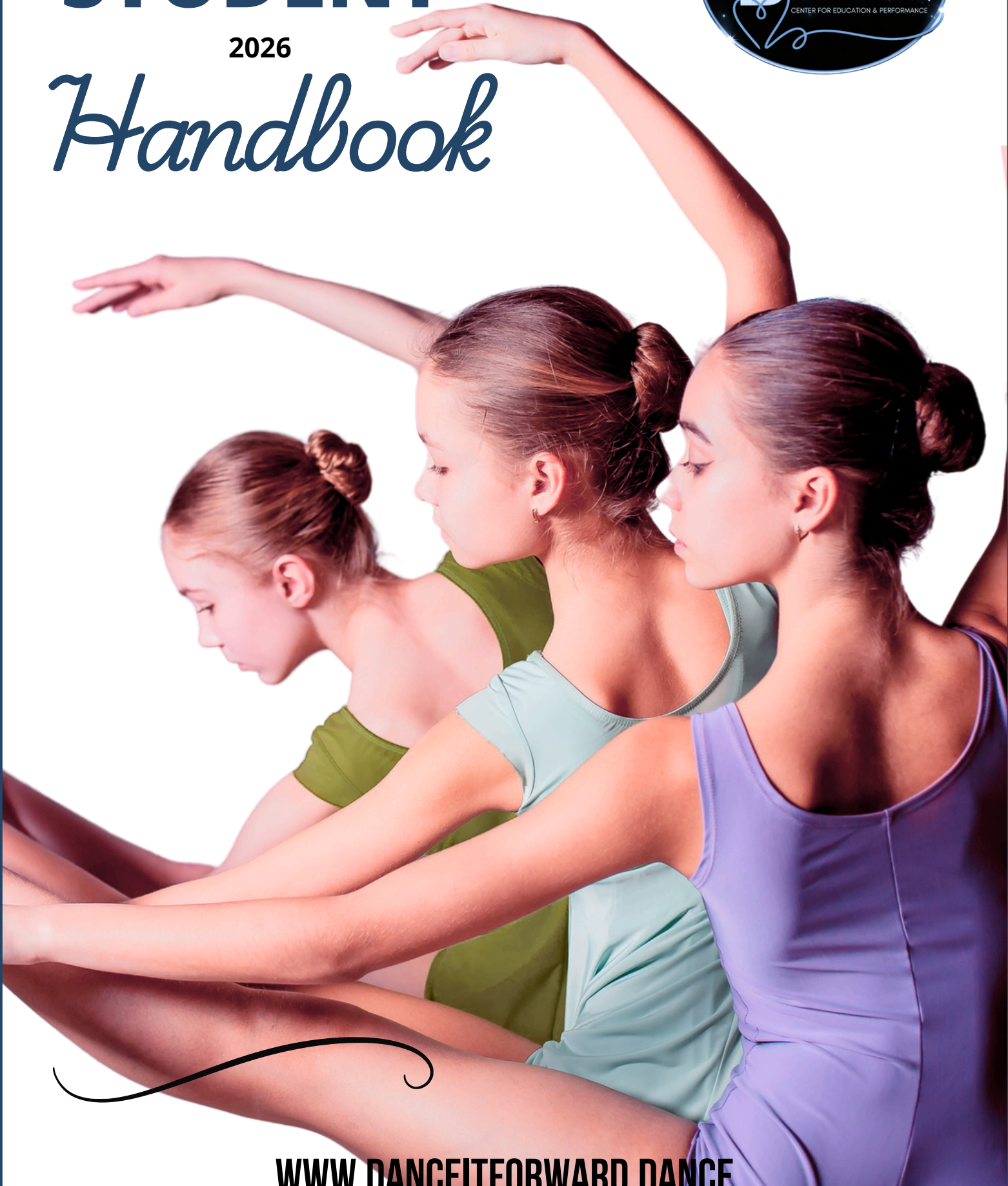


# STUDENT

2026

# Handbook



[WWW.DANCEITFORWARD.DANCE](http://WWW.DANCEITFORWARD.DANCE)

# welcome



Lori Garling  
Artistic Director & CEO



Melinda Fritz  
Executive Director



Pastelle Pergament  
Associate Artistic Director

Welcome to **Dance It Forward**. We are your nonprofit center for dance education...a School, a Company, an Outreach Program and an Arts Entertainment Group presenting performances & special events. As a regional center for the development of artistic talent, we play an important part of the cultural fabric of the Susquehanna Valley. We strive to make dance classes accessible for all, regardless of age, race, gender, dance level, or ability to pay. At Dance It Forward, we keep your dancer happy, healthy, safe and loved. We believe that Dance is a commitment to principles; an art form beyond rankings and judgment.

We have been a trusted name in dance education since 1971, founded by Shana Garling.

Please use this handbook as your guide to enhancing your dance experience and in gaining a clearer understanding of the dance world. While we encourage you to read this information carefully and keep it in a safe place for future reference, remember that our friendly office staff is always here to support you. No matter how big or small your query, we promise to assist you with enthusiasm!

Classes are offered using professional standards in a wide variety of genres. We are here to create dancers and the dance audiences of the future! You will be warmly welcomed.

Thank you for choosing us, now let's dance!

Most sincerely,

*Lori & Mindy*



Making a Difference with dance  
*Dance It Forward...*

# KEY INFORMATION

See the Monthly Newsletters and the Online Calendar for up to the minute info.



## Contact Information

**Address:** 3524 E Market St, York, PA 17402

**Contact:** 717-755-6683 (MOVE) Call or Text

**Email:** [CS@danceitforward.org](mailto:CS@danceitforward.org)

**Website:** [www.danceitforward.dance](http://www.danceitforward.dance)

**Facebook:** [www.facebook.com/danceitforwardusa](http://www.facebook.com/danceitforwardusa)

**Instagram:** [www.instagram.com/danceitforwardusa](http://www.instagram.com/danceitforwardusa)

We communicate through email, bulletin boards, the Online JR Portal, texting, phone calls, and the use of this handbook. To report absences, use your Online JR Portal. JOINING THE BAND APP IS REQUIRED.

**To report absences,** use your Online JR Portal.

## Our Hours

The office is open Mondays - Thursday 4 pm to 8 pm with classes held per the current schedule.

Always check the **CALENDAR** to confirm we are open.

Following the June Show, Summer Office Hours are posted on our **CALENDAR**.

Customer Service messages are usually handled within 48 hours on days we are open.

## OUR HISTORY

For those of you new to our organization, we'd like to share an abbreviated review of our 53 year history. That's a long time, and we are deeply rooted here for our community.

The school was founded in 1971 by Shana Garling in Mount Wolf, Pennsylvania under the name "Shana Garling's School of Ballet". Shana taught in a studio the size of a one car garage for many years. By 1979, the school added a second location on North George Street and with this expansion was renamed "Greater York Center for Dance Education". By this time, there were three instructors.

The Greater York Youth Ballet was founded in 1982, and we had our very first performance at the Appell Center for the Performing Arts in 1987. In June of 1999, our ballet company was evaluated and accepted as a performing member of the prestigious Regional Dance America, of the Northeast region of the U.S.A.

In December of 1999, Greater York was given the opportunity to present performances of "The Nutcracker Ballet" at the Appell Center for the Performing Arts. Our director was awarded the "KEY TO THE CITY" on multiple occasions for outstanding service in the performing arts.

The year 2000 brought a move to our current location, 3524 E. Market St., York. This provided the organization with 9000 sq. ft. of much needed space.

The Cultural Alliance of York County partnership began in 2001. In 2003, Greater York was named resident dance company of the Strand-Capitol Performing Arts Center.

The Greater York Chapter of the National Honor Society for Dance Arts was formed in 2006. This allowed the organization to grow leaders and provided motivated dancers to be recognized for maintaining superior academics while helping others.

The Cultural Alliance of York County awarded Lori Atwood with a Creative Impact Award in 2015 to create "The Hip Nut". This is a multicultural dance production created for and collaborated with many community members alongside professional dancer alumni.

In September 2019, we were awarded a grant from the York County Community Foundation's Hahn Home Fund for Embracing Aging. The center was able to offer Restorative Dance for those ages 50+ and a Family Dance Class for ages 7+ (children, parents, siblings, grandparents). During the 2019-20 season, many workshops were provided at no cost to the York community.

The 2020-2021 season celebrated our 50th Anniversary, and today we have survived the pandemic and are going strong! The FUTURE OF DANCE IS HERE, and we are dedicated to serve.

In 2023, we celebrated our 25th annual Nutcracker Ballet at the Appell Center for the Performing Arts. In addition, we adopted the legal name DANCE IT FORWARD to better express our mission of making dance available to everyone. This translates to making dance available in more creative and far-reaching ways.

The year of 2024 included a lot of administrative updates of our systems with the change to a more sophisticated student management system, the addition of new faculty and the completion of our first year of the Master Class series bringing dance professionals from around the world to educate our students. This included a master teacher from Italy and a current New York City Rockette. Our year ended by bringing back the Nutcracker Gala and enjoying a nearly sold out audience for our 26th annual Nutcracker Ballet.

## OUR PHILOSOPHY



At Dance It Forward, we believe that dance isn't just something you do—it's something you live. Dance Your Life is our tagline that encourages dancers to embrace movement as a way of expressing their passion, confidence, and personal journey. Dance is a force for positive change, both in individual lives and across communities. It is a universal language for all people. It changes lives.

We are your dance experts and are driven by a shared vision, purpose, and philosophy that permeates everything we do. Our school is a place where people of all ages, levels, and aspirations discover the joy of dance. We foster an environment that celebrates creativity, individuality, and self-expression, forming a vibrant community of teachers, students, and families who are passionate about the performing arts. We strive to nurture and develop their talents, celebrate their achievements, and inspire a deep love and appreciation for all styles of dance and the arts. We are committed to providing a safe and empowering space where every student can freely express themselves.

As a 501(c)3 nonprofit, we strive to bring all people to dance. Dance It Forward offers the highest level of service and instruction in the region, elite performances and training opportunities, and dedicated outreach activities that promote a lifelong enjoyment of the performing arts.

To maintain the highest educational standards, our faculty members are lifelong learners who continuously engage in certification programs, conferences, and other learning opportunities. Our success stems from a foundation of exceptional training, quality service, and an unshakable belief in that *dancing your life* is the way to live!

## OUR MISSION



At Dance It Forward, our mission is to spread joy, creativity, and connection through dance by offering vibrant, enriching, and healthy “dancexperiences” to our community.

We provide high-quality dance education using professional standards, dynamic performances, and meaningful outreach, ensuring that students of all levels, ages, and aspirations may participate, regardless of financial means.

We empower dancers to grow, express, and succeed—on and off the stage.

## OUR STUDENTS



You are taking the first step towards becoming an amazing dancer by making a solid commitment to your classes. At Dance It Forward, we have the best, most dedicated students with parents who truly care about a quality dance education. Class time is your opportunity to focus on yourself and improve your technique. Come prepared, leave distractions behind, and embrace each class as a chance to become even better at what you love. Respecting your teachers is key. Embrace every correction given, as it shows how much your teachers care about your growth. Always say thank you when receiving feedback and attention—it's a valuable opportunity for growth. Your commitment and appreciation for your teachers' knowledge and experience will propel you towards greatness. Nothing can stop those who apply themselves and value their guidance.

## OUR PARENTS

Congratulations parents for choosing a school that will give your dancer excellent technique and a happy, fun place to dance. We believe that your support plays a crucial role in your child's dance education. Your commitment to the process makes an enormous difference. Our programs thrive in a positive atmosphere that involves the cooperation and respect of everyone. By showing respect for one another, our students, and our faculty, you become role models for your children, demonstrating how to interact professionally and compassionately with others.



Your child's consistent attendance at all classes is important. Together, we foster a spirit of teamwork and dedication that forms an essential part of our educational process. While parents and teachers may have different perspectives, we share a common goal: ensuring that every student receives the best possible training around! By fostering mutual respect among our faculty and parents, we create an environment that nurtures our students with care and the highest quality education.

Students, especially younger ones, sometimes have disagreements and hurt feelings are developmentally normal and are considered peer conflict, not bullying. We do not label young children as bullies. Our role as educators is to use these moments as learning opportunities and to help children build emotional regulation, communication skills, and resilience. In class, dancers are consistently coached to:

***"Focus on yourself." "Use calm, respectful words." "Walk away and keep dancing." "Bring concerns to a teacher, not other dancers."***



To support this learning, we need the adults and our older dancers to model this same calm, solution-focused behavior. When parents or older dancers take sides or become emotionally involved, it often escalates situations and makes it harder for children to move forward.

Staff will manage all peer issues during class if they observe it in the classroom. Parents should remain neutral and reinforce the same language at home. If you are concerned about what happens in the lobby, please remain there with your dancer. Concerns should be directed to staff or directors.

Our shared goal is to help dancers learn how to navigate social challenges appropriately - skills that matter far beyond the dance center. Thank you for partnering with us to create a supportive, respectful environment for all dancers.

## SPECIAL INFORMATION FOR PARENTS OF EARLY CHILDHOOD STUDENTS

We provide early childhood dance education in a secure, nurturing, and stimulating environment. Our curriculum addresses the physical, emotional, and intellectual needs of our preschool students.

The first few weeks serve as an introductory phase to help students become comfortable with their overall dance experience. Through age-appropriate music, movement exercises, ballet, use of props, and creative games, we begin to foster coordination, listening skills, musical awareness, and imagination. Remember, preschool dance is about helping children tap into their imaginations and express themselves creatively, rather than solely learning steps. So don't worry if your child doesn't pirouette around the house right away—it's all part of their dance adventure.

The process of separating from parents is an important milestone for preschool children attending dance class. As children grow, they learn to develop an interest in class activities, feel comfortable with their peers, and understand that parents will always come back for them. We understand that some children may initially resist attending class, but it's usually short-lived. Here are some helpful suggestions:

- Focus on the positive aspects of the dance class experience.
- Ensure your child is engaged in an activity or under the teacher's care before you leave.
- Keep goodbyes brief and avoid prolonged farewells.
- Seek assistance from the teacher during the separation process.

It's okay if dance class may not be the right fit for your child at this moment. If your child expresses distress or does not want to participate, please don't panic. Pushing children beyond their comfort zones may create negative associations with dance. We encourage you to try again in future months, allowing your child to grow at their own pace.

### **Helpful Hints**

- Take your dancer to the restroom prior to class.
- Arrive 5-10 minutes prior to your class time.
- Students line-up at the door and do not enter the classroom until the teacher invites students in.
- Once your teacher welcomes the dancers into the class, you may confidently leave them and either wait in the lobby or in your car. You may even run an errand as long as you are back at the end of class.

**Always contact us if you have any questions. [CS@danceitforward.org](mailto:CS@danceitforward.org). Call or Text 717-755-MOVE (6683).**

# CHILD PROTECTION POLICY

Dance It Forward recognizes its duty of care to protect children and recognizes that abuse can take many forms, whether it be emotional, physical, sexual or neglect. All children have the right to protection from abuse. Dance It Forward is committed to a practice which protects children from harm. All faculty members are required to be mandated reporters in the state of Pennsylvania by which they accept and recognize their responsibilities regarding awareness of the issues which cause children harm. In addition, child abuse and criminal background checks will be required of all volunteers and staff.

- All children will be treated equally and with respect and dignity.
- The duty of care to children will always be put first.
- Enthusiastic and constructive feedback will be given.
- Bullying will not be accepted or condoned.
- All adults will act with good intentions of providing a quality dance education.
- Action will be taken to stop any inappropriate behavior.
- Video monitoring used throughout the building and classrooms.
- Our online enrollment system maintains parent provided contact name and number close at hand in case of emergencies.

## Responsibilities

At the outset of any production involving children Dance It Forward will:

- Undertake and monitor a risk assessment throughout the production process.
- Engage in effective recruitment of volunteers and other individuals with responsibility for children, including required volunteer clearances.
- Ensure that children are supervised at all times.
- Know how to get in touch with the local authority social services, in case it needs to report a concern.

## Parents

Dance It Forward believes it to be important that there is a partnership between parents and staff members. Parents are encouraged to be involved in the activities of the dance and share in the responsibility for the care of their children. All parents have the responsibility to collect (or arrange collection of) their children after class, rehearsals or performances. It is NOT the responsibility of volunteers or staff to take children home.

## Physical Contact

- All adults will maintain a safe and appropriate distance from children.
- Adults will only touch children when it is necessary in relation to the particular activity or directing them.

## HANDS ON APPROACH TO TEACHING

Faculty and staff use a hands on approach and from time to time a student may be touched in order to physically place the body for reasons of learning, understanding and feeling positions and movements related to dance technique. The art requires movement across the floor, close interactions with other dancers and possible faculty corrections which may include physical touch. If a dancer runs around or needs more direction, staff may lead them with hands on their shoulders or by holding their hand to a better place in which to participate. DIF faculty or staff is not responsible for injury as the result of physically correcting, placing or moving a student. There is never an intent to harm per our Child Protection Policy. Our sole intent is proper dance education.

## Managing Sensitive Information

Dance It Forward will ensure confidentiality in order to protect the rights of its students, including the safe handling, storage and disposal of any sensitive information.

## CHILD PROTECTION POLICY

### **Suspicion of Abuse & Reporting**

If you see or suspect abuse of a child while in the care of Dance It Forward, please make this known to the directors. If a serious allegation is made against any member of staff, volunteer, venue staff etc., that individual will be supervised by a mandated reporter at all times in the presence of the students until the investigation is concluded. The individual may also be excluded from the theatre, rehearsal rooms etc. and will not have any unsupervised contact with any other children in the production depending upon the situation. The child involved may be asked to refrain from attending until the investigation is completed.

### **Accidents & Injuries**

In the event that a child or youth is injured while under our care, the following steps should be followed: For minor injuries, scrapes, and bruises, we will provide First Aid (Band-Aids, etc.) as appropriate. For injuries requiring medical treatment beyond simple First Aid, the parent will immediately be summoned. If warranted by circumstances, an ambulance will be called. Once the child has received appropriate medical attention, an incident report will be completed. If a child joins a class, production or activity with an obvious physical injury, a record of this will be made. Parents are required to provide this information in writing upon arrival. This record will ascertain that the child did not sustain the injury while participating in dance and that faculty is aware of any limitations.

### **Conduct and Management of Children**

- After arrival, dancers under the age of 18 may not leave the studio building or performance space unsupervised by an adult.
- Dancers over the age of 16 who drive may leave the studio with a parent's written permission that we have on file stating that we are not held responsible; however, they may not take other minors with them. No dancer may ever leave a performance location once checked in.
- Our faculty may not drive students due to the liability.
- At performances, volunteers will be aware of where the children they are responsible for are at all times.
- At performances, all participants need to be signed in upon arrival and their exit supervised by a designated volunteer or staff.
- If a parent has not collected the child, it is the duty of the volunteer or staff to stay with that child.
- Children will be adequately supervised while going to and from the bathroom. For the protection of all, no one may be alone with a child in a bathroom with the door closed. Parents are strongly encouraged to have their children visit the bathroom prior to each class.
- Volunteers should ensure that any accidents are reported to the directors.

### **WELLNESS COMMITMENT**

At Dance It Forward, we believe excellence in dance is built on health, respect, and sustainability. We are committed to developing dancers who are not only technically strong, but physically healthy, mentally supported, and confident in their bodies. We value: • Safe training and injury prevention • Strength, conditioning, and proper recovery • Positive body image and respectful language. • Mental wellness and open communication • Education that empowers dancers to advocate for themselves.

We recognize that every dancer's body and journey is unique. Our goal is to foster a culture where dancers are encouraged to listen to their bodies, fuel themselves appropriately, ask questions, and grow with integrity. By prioritizing wellness, we prepare dancers not just for today's training, but for long, successful, and fulfilling lives in dance.

## OUR COMMUNITY COMMITMENT

Dance offers a powerful avenue for expression, creativity, celebration, entertainment, and transformation. At Dance It Forward (DIF), we prioritize creating a welcoming and supportive environment for all community members. DIF is dedicated to providing inclusive programming and services that celebrate the art of dance in all its forms and styles. We strive to ensure all students and families feel valued and respected within our community. DIF recruits and admits students and dancers regardless of race, religion (creed), gender, gender expression, or sexual orientation, granting equal access to all rights, privileges, programs, and activities. The school does not discriminate based on these factors in any of its operations or offerings.



## UNDERSTANDING DANCE EDUCATION

As a parent, your support is invaluable to your child's dance journey. Encourage them to be the best version of themselves, focusing on their own accomplishments rather than comparing themselves to others. Dance is an individual art form, and each student progresses at their own pace. Through dance, students learn commitment, teamwork, and the rewards of hard work. Our goal is to educate their minds, bodies, and souls, providing them with skills that will serve them well in all aspects of life.

It's natural for parents and students to draw inspiration from others, but let's focus on personal growth rather than making negative comparisons. Encourage your child to celebrate their achievements and avoid speaking negatively about teachers, fellow students, or other parents. Our faculty takes their role as mentors seriously, guiding students to act respectfully towards their peers, adults, and themselves. If you have questions or concerns, please reach out directly to us. Misinformation can be avoided by seeking accurate information from the right sources.

## WHAT IS AN ARTISTIC DECISION?

Artistic Decisions are related to vision, staff, repertoire, sets, choreography, costuming, music, casting, technical training, dancers' rules and regulations and production.

There are three essential elements to the success of any performing art: an idea, an artist and the audience. Vision is not static. It is something that changes and evolves over time, and we allow our Artistic Director these freedoms.

Matters regarding artistic decisions are a closed subject. The dynamics created by parental pressures to cast, level or line-up are unhealthy for everyone, and the directors have set this boundary. They will gladly share their input as to areas of accomplishment or improvement when feedback is requested.

## WHY IS THERE A DRESS CODE?



Having a dress code:

- Helps a dancer understand they are going to a structured class (compared to unstructured playtime). When dancers put on their uniform, they get into a specific mindset before dance class.
- Ensures that the clothing is not a distraction during class.
- Faculty needs to be able to see the dancers' bodies to make necessary corrections.
- Ensures that each dancer has the same brand, style and color of shoes and tights for on stage performances. Uniformity on stage during a performance starts with dress code.

At Dance It Forward, our dress code is designed to foster focus, inclusiveness, and equality among all dancers. By adhering to a uniform dress-wear, we create an environment where teachers can assess technique, alignment, and other crucial aspects of dance training effectively. Let's embrace the dress code with confidence and unity.

Students are required to carry their dance-wear, shoes, and belongings in a designated dance bag. Please remember to label your dancer's bag and all its contents with their name. Let's keep our dance-wear in excellent condition by regularly laundering and maintaining it.

During classes, we kindly request that students avoid wearing watches, jewelry, and safety pins, as they can be distracting. Dance shoes should never be worn outside to preserve their quality and cleanliness. Female students are encouraged to secure their hair tightly and neatly away from their faces, preferably in a tidy bun. Females who need bras normally are required to wear one to dance for reasons of hygiene and the health of the body. Maintaining good personal hygiene habits, including the use of deodorant for students aged 10 & older, is expected from all dancers.

### **WHERE TO GET THE REQUIRED DRESS**

Dress Code items such as leotards, tights, shoes, etc. must be purchased from the online store for uniformity- **Nimbly** (<https://www.shopnimbly.com/danceitforward>).

### **DRESS CODE NOTES**

\* Young dancers who are just trying it out may wear anything comfortable for the first TWO weeks prior to investing in the dress code items.

\* SUMMER Dress Code is relaxed except for the Ballet Intensive - proper dress code required.

\* Do not purchase from Amazon. All dancers need proper attire which is from the Nimbly site. Sizing Kits are available at our front desk to check correct size prior to you ordering.

## HOW DO I WEAR MY HAIR?

HAIR is to be neatly secured in a pony tail (away from the face) for classes in the School of Early Childhood and the School of Commercial Dance. The School of Ballet requires hair to be in classical style, ballet bun with no bangs.

[HOW TO DO A BALLET BUN Tutorial Link](#)



# GENERAL POLICIES

## 1. Respectful Class Atmosphere

To ensure a productive learning environment, we kindly ask parents and students not to interrupt a class in session. Your cooperation helps us maintain a seamless experience for everyone. The studios have viewing windows that faculty will have open whenever possible and it is not a distraction to the quality of the class.

## 2. Hydration and Nourishment

DIF promotes good nutritional practices. We encourage families to promote good eating habits. Please do not bring unhealthy foods into the dance center. Birthday cupcakes are fine; however, donuts and similar are discouraged.

Water is the only permissible beverage in our studios. We kindly request that you refrain from bringing food, drinks, or gum into the studios. By keeping food/snacks and beverages in the waiting area, our dance spaces remain clean and enjoyable for all.

No smoking or vaping, use of alcohol or illegal drugs is permitted.

## 3. Safety and Supervision

We cherish the opportunity to meet our students' siblings and appreciate your understanding that the safety of every child on our premises is our top priority. To ensure their well-being, please supervise children at all times. Do not rely on our front desk staff. They are there to answer the phones plus to answer Customer Service type inquiries/enrollments.

## 4. Focused Learning

During class time, we kindly request that all students refrain from using mobile phones, computers, or any electronic devices.

## 5. Communication

To streamline communication, we ask students and parents to direct all inquiries, messages, or concerns through the Dance It Forward office. Our dedicated team will be happy to assist you promptly and efficiently.

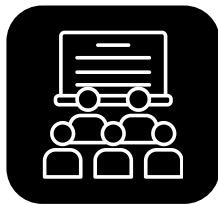
## 6. Promoting Positivity

It is important that we create a supportive and encouraging atmosphere within our dance community. We kindly request that you refrain from speaking negatively about teachers, students, or parents from other studios. Let's celebrate the talent and efforts of all dancers.

## 7. Respect for Teachers

Showing respect for our teachers is fundamental to maintaining a positive learning environment. Inappropriate behavior may result in dismissal from the school. Please do not enter the studios or attempt to speak with them without an appointment made through the office. Let's cultivate an atmosphere of mutual respect and appreciation.

Please note: policies change from time to time and although we try to keep this handbook updated, changes may be sent in email, posted on our website or stated in our newsletters.



## Class Placement

Class placement is based on ability and age appropriateness of the techniques being taught. A dancer's progress is dependent upon the consistency and frequency of training, just like any other athlete. Technical work is presented in a sequential format to meet the needs of each student who seeks quality training, enrichment and physical fitness; quality of training is never diminished regardless of the number of classes taken. Students remain in the same level until the skills to progress to the next level are achieved. The School of Early Childhood has specific ages groupings so that parents are assured a progressive class content. Class placement is unique to each student and involves a variety of factors such as:

- focus
- individual maturity
- comprehension
- physical development
- level work talent / work ethic
- attitude
- competency of execution
- natural abilities

We recognize that class changes are sometimes necessary. We allow for 2 class changes per season. After that, there is an admin fee to do so.

A note about Trials: if you enroll in a class trial, the class could fill prior to you enrolling and having your place held in that class.



## Medical Information

Your child's well-being is of utmost importance to us. Please inform the director and teachers of any medical conditions, disabilities, or medications your child may require. Our teachers are trained professionals who are eager to work with all children, and the more we know about your child, the better we can provide a fulfilling dance experience. Rest assured that all information regarding our students is treated with the utmost confidentiality.

## CLASS VISITORS

For the safety of our students and to fulfill our legal responsibilities, we are unable to permit visitors in the classroom during regular class sessions. Students should refrain from inviting siblings, relatives, or friends to their classes, except for special events such as "Bring a Friend Week" and in-studio performances. These occasions offer a unique opportunity for sharing the joy of dance with loved ones.

## ARRIVAL AND DEPARTURE

At Dance It Forward, we value punctuality and safety for all our students. We kindly ask students to arrive to the building 5-10 minutes before their class begins, allowing them to settle in and prepare for an amazing dance experience. To ensure the safety of our young dancers, children under the age of 10 should be picked up promptly after their class. For students aged 10 and older, we kindly request that they are picked up no more than 10 minutes after their class ends. We are unable to assume responsibility for students before or after their scheduled classes, so it's essential for parents to ensure timely drop-off and pick-up. Always call if you anticipate a delay. After 15 minutes, we will call the Primary Contact, the Secondary/Emergency Contact. After 30 minutes with no parent contact, we must call the authorities.

We understand that unforeseen circumstances or emergencies may arise, causing delays. If you find yourself in such a situation, please contact the studio immediately. Our priority is to keep your child calm and safe until they can be collected. Your communication is crucial, and we appreciate your cooperation.

Teen Drivers age 16 and over need a parent permission on file to leave the building. At no time may that take any younger dancers with them. DIF accepts no responsibility or liability for students leaving the building.

## ATTENDANCE

Every class at Dance It Forward is a step forward in the educational journey of our students. Regular attendance is essential for continuous progress and growth. It's crucial for children to feel completely confident with the choreography and their performance. Missing classes during this period could lead to frustration for the students, their teachers, and their classmates. We encourage all students to prioritize their dance education and make attending classes a top priority.

## TARDINESS

Dance is a physical activity that requires a properly warmed-up body to ensure safe movement execution. Students who arrive late miss out on the essential warm-up and/or barre exercises, which may increase the risk of injury. To prioritize the safety and well-being of our students, those arriving more than 10 minutes late may be asked to observe the class. We want all our dancers to enjoy their dance journey while staying safe and injury-free.

## MAKEUP CLASSES

Our makeup lesson policy is flexible. If a student misses for any reason or classes are cancelled, the student may attend an alternate lesson at no charge, anytime within that season. The Online JR Portal is where to schedule makeups. (Note: Scheduled closings should not be made up as they are already calculated into the annual tuition.) Private lessons have a 24 hour cancellation policy, or you will be charged the cost of the lesson. Non-performing classes missing June rehearsals may add make-ups.

## LOST AND FOUND

We know how easy it is for dance-wear, shoes, and personal items to get misplaced. To avoid any confusion, **please make sure to label all your child's belongings with their name.** We will make every effort to locate and return lost items; however, we kindly ask for your understanding that we cannot be held responsible for any items your child brings to class.

## EMERGENCY EVACUATION

While we have never experienced an emergency evacuation, we prioritize preparedness and the safety of our students and staff. Emergency evacuation routes are clearly posted throughout the studio and reception area. In the event of an emergency, students will calmly and quietly evacuate in single file to the designated area. Our dedicated teachers will take attendance to ensure everyone's safety. Students and teachers will return to the building only when the all-clear signal is given, indicating that it is safe to do so.

## HEALTH, SAFETY & ILLNESS

The health and well-being of our students and staff are of utmost importance to us. We kindly request your cooperation in keeping our dance community healthy. If your child exhibits any of the following symptoms, we kindly ask that you keep them at home to prevent the spread of illness:

- Nasal discharge that is green or yellow
- Complaints of ear pain
- Consistent cough
- Severe sore throat
- Pink, burning, itching, or discharging eyes
- Diarrhea or vomiting
- Fever

If these symptoms or any other contagious conditions are observed in your child during a class, we will promptly contact you to arrange for their immediate pick-up. When your child has a fever, please keep them at home until their temperature returns to normal. Furthermore, if there are any lingering signs of illness such as glassy or watery eyes, listlessness, or drowsiness, we kindly request that you keep your child at home. This precaution will ensure that the illness has fully passed, and your child will be well enough to fully participate in class activities the following week.

### Food Allergies

Please review the waiver statement for food allergies. If a parent has concerns, they need to remain with their child to assure that they are safe and not exposed to anything that causes allergic reactions for them.

# STUDENT AND PARENT USE OF SOCIAL MEDIA

We recognize the power of social media in facilitating communication and connection. To ensure a positive and respectful online presence, we have established guidelines for our students and parents. Please take a moment to review our Social Media Policy below:

**1.**

## Respecting Privacy

Please remember that anonymity on social media platforms is never guaranteed. Exercise caution when sharing posts, images, or videos that may identify children, parents, or staff at Dance It Forward. You do not have permission to reveal any information that compromises DIF. This includes personal information about director, staff or dance families or anything proprietary or confidential to them or DIF.

**2.**

## Upholding the Code of Conduct

Your behavior on social media should align with the values and principles outlined in this handbook. Let's maintain a positive and inclusive online environment. Those who choose to post negatively or with a negative tone about staff or Dance It Forward in general will be dismissed.

**3.**

## Promoting Respect and Kindness

Any comments or posts that are obscene, defamatory, threatening, harassing, discriminatory, or hateful towards Dance It Forward staff, students, or families are strictly prohibited and may result in disciplinary or legal action.

**4.**

## Integrity and Confidentiality

If you choose to engage on social media as a studio volunteer or employee, please do so with integrity, respect, and adherence to our privacy and confidentiality policy. Avoid sharing any sensitive studio information.

**5.**

## Respect The Law

Please observe intellectual property laws, including those related to costume design and choreography when posting online. Respect the creative work and ownership of others.

Respect the law, including those laws governing defamation, discrimination, harassment, and copyright / fair use. If you post videos, never post any choreography in its entirety; DIF owns the copyright of all choreography taught at this school.

If we state that video is prohibited, please show respect.

# ETIQUETTE & STATEMENT OF COMMUNITY

The Dance It Forward community is based on respect and cooperation. Dancers should be able to enjoy the art of dance in a positive healthy and distraction-free environment. We guide our students to build their skills for life in an environment where honesty, integrity, and respect are taken seriously. All students are asked to abide by dance etiquette and using the following guidelines:

- All students will resolve conflicts peacefully and will be honest and respectful to all members of the DIF community.
- All students will demonstrate stewardship of DIF which includes our property and the property of others.
- Cell phones should be turned off during classes and rehearsals.
- Video recording anyone with electronic devices is strictly prohibited. This includes SnapChat and TikTok.

Dance Etiquette consists of courtesy and good manners. Because dance is fun and exciting and all of our dancers are here because they want to be, rarely are there discipline issues in the studio. We expect courteous, polite and respectful behavior of all who participate in our program.

Professional behavior means being respectful of directors, faculty, facility, art form, and fellow artists; behavior that compromises our good name is unacceptable. TEAMWORK is EXPECTED of everyone. This keeps our dance family healthy. Note: Students may be dismissed for poor behavior or attitude or social media posts or gossip that could be perceived as negative against Dance It Forward, it's instructors, programs, directors, dancers or that could be perceived "not positive"; all monies are forfeited and account balances are due immediately.

Dance It Forward needs to be a DRAMA FREE ZONE for the peace and joy of all the artists.

## **Guidelines for the Classroom**

- Chewing gum, eating, drinking, talking, sitting down, smoking, leaning against the wall or poor attitude are all unacceptable forms of behavior during a dance class as they would be on stage in front of an audience.
- Students are expected to arrive dressed for class and on time.
- No street shoes on dance floors as they bring dirt onto the dance area.
- Put dance shoes on just prior to class while inside.
- Electronic Devices including cell phones must be kept out of the classroom by students. No electronic devices may be used inside the studios or during performances or rehearsals unless invited. Absolutely NO recording may be done – in any format – unless you are specifically invited to do so by the Artistic Director, or it is announced as a social media blitz event.

*Those not willing to follow the dress code and Dance It Forward policies and standards will not be able to participate.*

## **Noncompliance to Regulations**

### **Dismissal**

A student may be dismissed for noncompliance to regulations, for being uncooperative, disruptive poor attitude or for endangering the health, welfare and safety of themselves or others. Bullying creates an atmosphere of intimidation and fear and it distracts us from our mission. This will not be tolerated. Bullying ~ verbal, electronic, written or physical regardless whether it takes place within the studio, theatre, elsewhere or cyberspace should be immediately reported to us. Bullies will be suspended or dismissed.

We have previously experienced misinformation being passed on from parent to parent which has resulted in unnecessary confusion or problems. Please direct all questions to the office.

# EVENT PARTICIPATION POLICY

At Dance It Forward, we are committed to fostering a positive, respectful, and inclusive environment for all dancers, families, staff and attendees. We believe that mutual respect and support contribute to the success of our programs and the well-being of our dance community.

## **Respect & Conduct Policy**

Any individual—whether a dancer, parent, or community member—who chooses to publicly or privately engage in negative discourse, defamatory remarks, or actions that undermine Dance It Forward, its programs, or its staff may be restricted from attending or participating in our public events.

## **Enforcement**

Decisions regarding participation and attendance restrictions will be at the sole discretion of leadership of Dance It Forward. This includes the right to decline ticket purchases and event entry to any individual whose behavior is deemed detrimental to the center's positive and professional environment. Our goal is to ensure that all dancers, families, staff and guests can enjoy a supportive and uplifting experience.

We appreciate the cooperation of all attendees in maintaining a culture of kindness, encouragement, and respect.

# TERMINATION OF ENROLLMENT

## ***Withdrawal***

Enrollment continues for the season from August to June. Nonattendance does not constitute withdrawal from our program. All requests for Early Withdrawal must be submitted through the Online JR Portal link. If paid more than one month in advance, a 75% refund less a \$45 administration fee will be returned with withdrawal notification. No refunds are available for Summer Sessions, Production Dues, Tickets, or Awards. If discontinued prior to the performance, costumes/use of costumes are forfeited. Whether attending or not, tuition will be charged until the end of the month that the office has been notified through the Online JR Portal. Any scholarships or discounts (if applicable) will be relinquished if the student withdraws or is dismissed before the completion of the course or season. If classes go virtual for any reason, tuition remains the same.

## ***Early Termination***

Students are accepted into the program with the understanding that they have self-control and are able to work as a part of a group and is able to adhere to DIF policies. A student may be dismissed for negative attitude of self or parents and overall noncompliance to regulations, especially those stated in this handbook or for the protection of children. Dance It Forward may refuse services to students who have delinquent accounts or whose attitudes are perceived as negative or insubordinate. Rudeness, lack of discipline and/or disruptive behavior by any student /family member will be cause for immediate expulsion from the program and we reserve the right to dismiss any student from the program without refund due to any of the above.

In certain rare circumstances, the school may need to terminate a student's enrollment. Reasons for termination of enrollment may include:

- Disruptive or dangerous behavior by students or their parents.
- Abuse of other children, staff, or property.
- Inability of Dance It Forward to meet the child's needs.
- Disrespect to policy or our staff and volunteers.

We want every student to have a positive and fulfilling dance journey at Dance It Forward. Rest assured, termination of enrollment is a last resort, and we will make every effort to resolve any challenges that may arise.

## Tuition

CLASSES PER WEEK	MONTHLY TUITION
1	\$65
2	\$105
3	\$145
4	\$185
5	\$225

- E-payments via the Parent Portal; Automatically charged on the last business day of the month in advance
- \$2/mo - Admin fee (covers App & portal)
- 2.59% surcharge on credit card payments
- Annual tuition is divided into 11 equal monthly installments (August-June). This guarantees your place in class for the season.
- There are no refunds. This includes tuition, production dues, tickets, membership dues, awards, attire, fundraisers or merchandise.
- Hip Hop & Breakdancing & Adult classes have no discounts and are \$65/month.
- Class scheduling is subject to availability.
- Tuition cannot be transferred or paused.
- Unenroll through the Parent Portal Only by the 15th of the month to be removed from the following month.
- Swap or Drop a Class: No transfers or changes after Production Dues deadlines - Oct 15 (Nutcracker); Nov 1 (Winter) & Jan 15 (Spring).
- Returned Check Fee & Failed Credit Card Fee - \$25.
- Late payment fee of \$20 will be added to your account on the 15th of the month.
- If paying by check, submit in advance by the 25th of the month to avoid your credit card being
- All accounts must have a credit card on file. charged. No Card On File - \$25 monthly Fee.
- Dance It Forward reserves the right to refuse services with anyone with delinquent accounts, non-compliance to regulations or inappropriate behavior.

**Regularly check the Student Center page of [danceitforward.dance](http://danceitforward.dance) for updates.**

## Annual Membership

Membership Dues are charged once per season upon enrollment.

**Covers Registration & Admin, Priority Access to our Special Children's Events (usually a fee) & Unlimited make-up classes**

*Register by August 15!*

REGISTRATION IS ONGOING

\$40 per Individual Membership

\$75 per Family Membership (2+ dancers)

*Non-members at 15%*

## Makeup Lessons

Our members receive unlimited and our makeup lesson policy is flexible. If a student misses for any reason or classes are cancelled, the student may attend an alternate lesson at no charge, anytime within that season but must be scheduled through the Parent Portal.

*Scheduled closings should not be made up as they are already calculated into the annual tuition.*

## Discounts & Offers

**We strive to make our classes high value with no surprise fees, plus offer multiple class discounts to families.**

- Family/Multiple Class Discount: Add-on other family members at the \$40/mo rate. Maximum Family Discount \$175.
- Boys: 50% discount; does not discount Summer Programs, Production Dues, Membership Dues, Hip Hop, Breakdancing or Company.
- Bring-A-Friend: Current student earns \$25 account credit for referring a friend who enrolls.

## Optional Fundraisers

- The Parents Committee makes available individual fundraisers per season for students to earn credits towards trips, dues, and other dance expenses.
- Details are included in our monthly newsletters.

## Need Assistance?

- Work/Study Opps: A limited number of opportunities are available to assist with needed duties.
- Contact [CS@danceitforward.org](mailto:CS@danceitforward.org) for assistance.

## PRODUCTION DUES

- **Production Dues** cover the cost of creating productions. This includes rehearsal hours, choreography, venue, costumes, rentals, staff, props, set, lighting design & production, music editing, licensing fees.
- Dues are charged per performing class for the School Year Season.
- The system will charge the season's Production Dues in 2 non-refundable installments: \$115 due October 15 and \$115 due January 15.
- No additional costume fees. Early Childhood keeps their June Show costume. Tickets to our performances are separate & extra.
- If you do not wish to pay Production Dues, you may choose a non-performing class.
- Total annual amount charged regardless of when you enroll; non-refundable.
- A June Show Awards Fundraiser is held each Spring for dancers to earn the cost of the award (\$15) or pay it choose not to fundraise.

# VOLUNTEERING

Volunteering is appreciated and welcomed of parents with clearances. Volunteering is only required by members of our performing companies although we urge everyone to get involved by joining a Volunteer team! There's nothing better than working together with your family.

Backstage volunteers do not purchase tickets to the performance in which they volunteer. We make every effort to allow volunteering parents to observe their dancer onstage.

All prospective volunteers must obtain the following clearances:

- Report of criminal history from the Pennsylvania State Police (PSP); and
- Child Abuse History Clearance from the Department of Human Services (Child Abuse). Additionally, a fingerprint based federal criminal history (FBI) submitted through the Pennsylvania State Police or its authorized agent is required if the volunteer has lived outside the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania in the last 10 years. If the volunteer is not required to obtain clearances, they must swear or affirm in writing that they are not disqualified from service based upon a conviction of an offense under §6344. [https://www.pa.cogentid.com/index\\_dpwnnew.htm](https://www.pa.cogentid.com/index_dpwnnew.htm)

[Child Abuse History](#)

[State Police Criminal Background Check](#)

Under NO circumstances may anyone volunteer without having submitted their clearances – Child Abuse & State Police. It is the sole responsibility of the volunteer to ON THEIR OWN to submit this information that will be reviewed prior to each performance or volunteer event. You will be turned away from the event if we do not have these on file.

# COMMUNITY SERVICE

We do many great things for our community! Founded by NDEO in 2005, the National Honor Society for Dance Arts has many exciting benefit for our students. It allows us to celebrate the artistic and academic achievements of exceptional dance students and helps to create honor, prestige and reward. The Greater York Chapter of the National Honor Society for Dance Arts is housed at the center. This distinguished group of youth are students in Middle School and High School. Members have done a lot of great things! Our outreach projects and performances included the United Way Kickoff, Spruced Up, blankets made for flood victims and gift bags as holiday gifts for children in need, Dance It Forward Food Drive, Light Up York, Symphony Children's Concerts, and more. Individually, our members also dedicated many hours of service to the community. Some of the agencies included Leg Up Farm, York Rescue Mission, and Make-A-Wish. Members have also provided leadership to several area high school dance teams and student governments. Please inquire if your dancer has interest in joining.

# Performing *Details*



**D**ANCE   
IT FORWARD  
CENTER FOR EDUCATION & PERFORMANCE

## WINTER PERFORMANCES

### Nutcracker Ballet

Held at the Appell Center for the Performing Arts

The Greater York Youth Ballet and Variations Ballet Class will learn their Nutcracker dances during class time and do not need to audition although they may if they wish an additional role. All other roles are by audition.

*Nutcracker Ballet auditions are held in September. To audition, Dancers should register for their correct time slot to audition within your Online JR Portal or visit us online at [www.danceitforward.dance](http://www.danceitforward.dance).*

### Winter Showcase, Special Visitors' Week or The Hip Nut

Depending upon which class you choose, performing classes will be in a unique Winter Showcase, Special Visitors' Week or The Hip Nut with most of the rehearsing being held during the regular class time with a few group rehearsals closer to show time. **Newsletters will detail this information to you.**

## SPRING PERFORMANCES

### The June Show

These performances are for all of our performing classes usually held at the Appell Center for the Performing Arts.



Dance It Forward is excited to offer students the opportunity to participate in our seasonal performances. Participation in these events is a privilege that allows dancers to showcase what they have learned in a professional setting.

**Rehearsals & Performances Details** Most performing classes will rehearse performance material during a portion of their regular class time. Details will be announced in our Monthly Newsletters. By enrolling in a performing class, you agree to attend all rehearsals and shows as scheduled. Ballet Program Classes are technique-focused and do not have Production Dues as they are non-performing classes. Ballet Program students may choose to enroll in Ballet Variations class to learn a dance to perform.

If you do not wish to pay Production Dues, please enroll in a non-performing class.

The School of Early Childhood performing students keep their June show costumes. The School of Commercial Dance and the School of Ballet costumes are lent from our inventory of thousands of costumes. Hip Hop costumes are often street wear selected by the director and provided by the dancer. Crews and Dance/Pom groups typically wear their uniforms.

**Payment and Deadlines** The final deadline for all account balances is by the first In-Studio Dress Rehearsal or 10 days before the show, whichever comes first. If a student withdraws or is dismissed from class, any dues paid are non-refundable.

**Attendance and Commitment** In the weeks leading up to performances, it is crucial that students attend all classes to rehearse. For the safety and security of all participants, students are expected to stay for the entire performance, which typically lasts about 2 hours. Please note: Artistic staff has the right to pull a student with excessive absences or poor attitude from a performance at any time with no refund.

**Important Dates** Participation in performances requires commitment to attend all listed dates and events on the Dance Center Calendar. Dress rehearsals are mandatory for all students. Please check the calendar now and watch for updates.

**Tickets** Ticket information will be shared via our Social Media pages, Monthly Newsletters, and student emails. Every attendee must have a ticket due to fire regulations, except backstage volunteers who remain backstage and do not require a seat. Please note that there are no refunds for tickets.

# PERFORMING

## The Power of Performance

Performance opportunities are an essential part of dance training. Our performances provide a professionally directed platform for students to present their achievements. It not only enhances their dance training but also contributes to their overall personal development. The experience builds confidence, dance presentation skills, and prepares participants for future endeavors. Students learn the importance of teamwork and the joy of creating something remarkable together.

## STAY INFORMED...Monthly Newsletters

The **Monthly Newsletters contain all the necessary information related to performing** including who performs what and when, what to wear, when and where to be for arrival/dimissal, about costumes, and more. As the season progresses, we will distribute updated performance information in our newsletters.

Note: ***Dress Rehearsal is mandatory for ALL participants.***

IMPORTANT DATES ARE LISTED IN THE **NEWS** AND ON THE **CALENDAR**. PLEASE BE SURE TO INFORM YOURSELF BY READING THIS INFORMATION

## Production Dues

Please see page 22, ***Production Dues***, regarding the cost of participation in our shows. Note: we do not sell costumes. Please refer to newsletters for details as to what a dancer needs to provide and what they get to keep. Note: We have full capability of transitioning our performances to Virtual (viewed online) should the need arise such as a quarantine. No refunds if we need to go virtual.

## Dress Rehearsal

Participation in Dress Rehearsal is mandatory. Dress Rehearsal gives the students a chance to become familiar with and rehearse on the beautiful Appell Center stage. Students will need to be there at the specified time (see the Newsletter) and bring along all of their costumes, hair and makeup items for the concert. Students will need to be there at the specified time and bring along all of their costumes, hair and makeup items for the concert.

Students will be signed into the venue upon arrival by their responsible parent or guardian and will be supervised through the duration of rehearsal. Students may not leave the premises without being signed out by a parent/guardian.

## Performance Guidelines

What you need for each performance will be given to you well in advance and detailed in the Newsletter. Costumes also may be lent or given or dancers may be asked to provide something such as jeans, or a specific color of an item. Alterations are needed on occasion and are the responsibility of the student.

Students should not wear any part of their costumes, accessories, or tights prior to the dress rehearsal or performance in order to keep it looking sparkling and new.

Important note: No Eyeglasses are to be worn onstage unless a student's sight is so impaired that it is considered a disability and the office has been given notice. If a dancer has an injury and is wearing a cast, it will be determined on an individual basis whether that will be able to perform.

### Snacks

Our staff and volunteers will ensure that children have an opportunity to drink water and will be given a snack such as animal crackers or pretzels at an allocated time when they are not onstage.

**What To Bring - For uniformity, shoe & tights must be purchased on *Nimbly*.** (For your convenience and budget, many of the items needed for class will be used for performance such as shoes and tights.)

- Bring a bottle of water to the performance, labeled with full name.
- Your costumes, tights (one extra pair) and accessories with NAME on all belongings. Hang and press them before each performance.
- Label everything with your name.
- Bring clean dance shoes and only those sold through *Nimbly*.
- Leave jewelry at home; small stud earrings are acceptable.
- Makeup (red toned lipstick, blush, mascara), hairspray, bobby pins, bun pins, hairnets, stockings, socks, hair ties, bandaids, baby wipes/makeup removers, and safety pins.

### Details

- Headpieces are to be worn on the RIGHT side and should be secured with bobby pins or sewn into place. Be sure to "X" bobby pins. Hats should be punctured with a scissors or pin and then pinned in place.
- No Gum or candy backstage.
- Clear nail polish preferred. All nails need to be short for the safety of the other dancers.
- Unless otherwise specified, straps should meet like a "V" in the back.
- No underpants are to be worn under tights, leotards or costumes.
- DANCERS who perform in more than one dance must arrive wearing a tan/nude colored leotard. Depending on the costuming, any dancer may be asked to provide a tan/nude colored leotard. The straps should be regular and NOT X'd.

## PERFORMING

### **Appell Center Rules**

No eating, drinking, or smoking is allowed in the theatre. We are teaching respect for the theatre, the facility and each other. Please help us. Running, yelling, food in the theatre, smoking, and video-taping are not permitted. If you see anyone showing such disrespect, either STOP them or report them directly to a DIF Security Volunteer or Stage Mgr.

**Tickets** will go on sale to the public at a time announced on social media and detailed in the Newsletter. The theatre does require everyone in attendance to have a ticket/seat due to fire laws.

**Audience Etiquette** We encourage enthusiastic applause during the performance. The more energy you give us, the more excited the dancers become!

We request that everyone remains seated during the performance. If you need to leave the auditorium, do so between pieces.

**No Video Recording** Due to copyright and contractual rules and child protection policy, the video recording of performances is strictly prohibited. We will have a professional videographer make recordings available to you whenever possible.

### **Parent Volunteers**

We need class moms to supervise each class. Parents who are volunteering to help at the performance will also need to be available for Dress Rehearsal day to ensure they understand their roles and can see how everything will be run on show day. During your dancer's own performance, class moms will get to watch the dance from a designated area in the auditorium. Volunteers need to keep their phones away while backstage.

**Photographs-Backstage** The taking of photographs or use of electronic devices such as cellphones/video cameras is not allowed backstage. In addition, posting photographs, videos or comments onto social media (especially during the time rehearsals or production is in progress) is a violation of backstage behavior policy of everyone – adults included. Cell phones will be put away prior to each stage rehearsal/performance for good focus of all involved. Audience members may take photographs of the performance in progress.

**Flowers/Gifts To Your Dancer** Those who wish to greet a performer after the show or present flowers/gifts should do so after the dancer is picked up. There is no room for flowers or gifts backstage.



## THANK YOU FOR BEING A PART OF OUR DANCE FAMILY!

Thank you for choosing Dance It Forward as your dance home. We are thrilled to have you on board for an extraordinary dance journey filled with passion, growth, and boundless possibilities.

We are wholeheartedly committed to supporting and guiding you every step of the way. Let's maintain open lines of communication and work together to ensure a positive and uplifting dance experience.

Our dancers will shine and embrace the magic of dance that we all love so very much!

**DANCE IT FORWARD, MAKING A *DIFFERENCE* WITH DANCE.**



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