

MMDA School Policies

Attire – The Mississippi Metropolitan Dance Academy has a required dress code for all students which enables the teacher to best see each student's body and correct their placement. Each level has a required uniform. Please see the individual class listings for specific colors and styles. Leotards and tights should be worn without underpants for everyone over the age of five. Jewelry, skirts (attached or unattached unless specified for the combo classes) are not permitted in class. Hair for level 2 and above must be worn in a BUN as pirouettes are taught at this level and hair in their face will hinder their ability to turn. Hair for everyone else should be worn up and out of the face in a pony tail or clip. Students in the ¾, 4/5 and 5/6 Combo classes are to arrive with their tap shoes on and the dancers are to bring their ballet shoes in a small bag. All other students ages 6 and older are asked not to wear their dance shoes outside. Dancers are to arrive with their street shoes on and are to bring their dance shoes in a small bag.

Class Placement and Student Evaluation-Students are initially placed in the combination classes by age. Class placement for older students after Level 1 will be made by the MMDA staff based on age and ability. Your child may not be promoted to the next level every year. Our primary concern is that a student be placed in a level that is appropriate to his or her skill level and physical strength. If a child is promoted too soon, then he or she will miss some very valuable training. These children also struggle in the next level, which is unnecessary and could result in injury. A student who carefully develops his or her technique early in the curriculum will find advancement in later years to be smoother and more rewarding.

Attendance – All students are expected to attend classes regularly and to be on time. Any student more than 10 minutes late to class will not be allowed to dance but will observe instead. Parents are asked to notify the school if a student is going to be absent for any reason more than two consecutive lessons. If an absence cannot be avoided, the missed lesson may be made up in another class as arranged by the instructor. Students in the Intermediate and Advanced levels must notify the school if they will be absent. Parents are expected to pick up their child immediately following their class. If a child must remain late, please notify the office in advance. Parents of students taking the final class of the evening must never be late for any reason.

Snow/Hurricane-MMDA follows the Madison and Rankin County schools Snow and Hurricane policy. If Madison schools close for bad weather-the Madison location will be closed. If Rankin schools close for bad weather-the Reservoir location will be closed. In the instance of weather conditions deteriorating after school hours, please call the office or check the website and our Facebook page to inquire about class cancellations

Withdrawal and Refunds – Refunds **will not** be given for tuition, registration fees, costume payments, or recital fees. Students are only allowed to drop a class at the end of a trimester. If a student, for any reason, has to withdraw from the school after class has begun, the parent must submit a written letter by mail or by calling the Madison studio at 601-853-4508. Non-attendance is not considered withdrawal from a class. If a student decides to drop in the middle of a trimester they will be required to pay through the end of the trimester due to that student taking up a spot in the class that another student could have occupied the entire year.

1st Semester: August 16-November 30
2nd Trimester: December 1-February 28
3rd Trimester: March 1-May 31

Parents Observation – Parents are allowed to watch class the week of Nov. 15-19. This date is **tentative** per CDC guidelines for gatherings at that time. During Parents Observation Week we would like to present the class for your viewing as it is held usually without interruptions. This week is intended for parents, relatives, and **OLDER** siblings. Out of consideration of the teachers, we ask that you refrain from bringing younger siblings because it is very difficult for them to remain quiet and seated for an entire class period. If we are not able to have parents observation we will video the class and send out the link to view.

Respect – All siblings of dancers must be supervised in the lobby of the studios. Children are not allowed to play and run inside the building. If there is not a class in a studio while your child is waiting for class they are not permitted to go inside that studio. **NO FOOD OR DRINK**(except water) is allowed inside the building. Students may eat and drink outside the building. This is to prevent insect problems and to prevent spills and our property being ruined.

Tuition/Fees – Nine and a half months of tuition is due on the first of each month-August tuition is prorated for two weeks. **A returned check fee/insufficient bank draft fee is \$30.** Choices for payment plans are monthly by bank draft, semester by check or bank draft or annual by check or bank draft. Checking accounts will be debited on the first of each month for tuition/recital/costume fees due that month for those who choose monthly bank draft. If you choose semester by check your 9 or 9 ½ months of tuition, costume and recital fees will be split into two payments due on August 16 and January 4. If you choose the yearly plan your 9 or 9 ½ months of tuition, costume and recitals fees are due on the first day of class. Please do not choose to pay by semester or for the entire year if you think there is a possibility that you may drop within the semester as we do not refund tuition. Please note that accounts that are on the semester payment option that are delinquent will be charged a \$20 late fee per 30 days that the semester payment is past due from the due dates listed above. Recital Costumes are \$70 each. A recital costume deposit of \$70 is due December 1st and balances are due February 1. **Costume fess are non-refundable.** A recital fee of \$65 per family is due on March 1. There will be an addition \$30 recital fee due for each additional family member registered in dance. Recital fees are non-refundable. This recital fee helps to assist in the tremendous financial undertaking that MMDA assumes when undertaking a production of this magnitude.

Learning Process/Class Procedure – At MMDA students will follow a structural sequence of training that is designed to increase skill, endurance, and discipline in keeping with their age, maturity, and physical development. A set syllabus of training that encompasses many styles of ballet training is used by all teachers at MMDA. Corrections are inherent in dance instruction; therefore, the students will be verbally and physically guided by the teachers to ensure proper body placement and execution of movement.
If a student's goal is to dance on pointe, she will need to take ballet technique classes more than once a week beginning at age 8 or 9 to gain the strength in the ankles and feet in order to be ready by the age of 11 or 12. Many factors are evaluated when placing a child on pointe. The MMDA faculty will notify each student when they are ready for pointe work.

Summer Study – Maintaining momentum through the summer is essential for progress. For every class missed, it takes two classes to return to the same level of accomplishment. MMDA offers Summer Programs with guest teachers from around the world for all levels. Attending Summer Intensives are encouraged after the completion of Level 1 as students can make tremendous progress during the summer months without the added pressure academic studies.

Volunteer Opportunities – Parent Volunteers are a vital resource for the school as well as the performing company. The MMB Parents Guild is a group of parent and community volunteers who are ballet enthusiasts. Volunteers are involved with activities surrounding the school's end of the year recital in May as well as the company productions including many activities surrounding *The Nutcracker*. Please email us info@msmetroballer if you are interested in volunteering.

Manners for Dance Students

Students show respect for others by:

- *Keeping their hands to themselves during class, waiting quietly for others to have a turn and for instructions from the teacher.*
- *If you are late to class, wait for the music to finish and ask your teacher respectfully to enter class.*
- *Respecting items that belong to others.*

Students show respect for their teacher and art form they are learning by:

- *Being on time for class and dressed properly.*
- *Listening when the teacher is speaking.*
- *Never hanging on the barres*
- *Always ask before leaving the room for any reason.*
- *Always finishing every exercise, never walking off noisily or showing anger or aggravation.*
- *Leaving water bottles outside of class and no gum or candy in the studio.*

Dancers show respect to the studio by:

- *Never running in the classroom or hallways.*
- *Putting trash in its proper place.*
- *Always keeping belongings inside their dance bags so items are not lost or left at the studio.*

Parents show respect for the dance class, teacher, and studio by:

- *Making every effort to get children to class on time and picking them up promptly after class.*
- *Making sure the children have the opportunity to use the restroom before class.*
- *Clearly marking dance shoes and all items with your child's name.*

Expected Ballet Class Etiquette

- *After every class it is proper etiquette to thank your teacher with a bow and also personally walking up to your teacher to say “thank you.” This will make both the teacher and student end class on a positive note.*

Many Ways that Parents can be involved in the education of their child enrolled at MMDA

1. *Buy tickets to MMB Company performances-The Nutcracker at Christmas and our Spring Gala. This broadens your child’s understanding of the arts as a whole. These are also wonderful gifts for birthdays, holidays, etc....*
2. *Encourage your child to read age appropriate biographies of dancers and study the history of dance.*
3. *Expose your child to musical training through the study of music in school, singing in a chorus, playing a musical instrument, and listening to all musical styles.*
4. *Allow your child to attend master classes offered periodically at the studio.*
5. *Become award of good eating habits and nutrition.*
6. *Observe the practice of good body conditioning and flexibility to avoid dance injuries. Encourage stretching at home and exercises that benefit aerobic conditioning, i.e. swimming, biking, jumping rope, pilates.*
7. *Allow your child to follow their hearts, talents, and interests.*
8. *Remember that MMDA want to train and develop your child to the highest caliber while nurturing the individual to become a creative artist and individual*

The Benefits of ballet training extend far beyond the mastery of steps and positions. Classical ballet training also helps develop:

- *Beautifully-sculpted, strong articulate and flexible bodies*
 - *The joy of expressing oneself through movement*
 - *Commitment*
 - *Determination*
 - *An appreciation for the arts-as a performer and as an audience member*
 - *Patience*
 - *Attention to Detail*
 - *Self-Discipline*
 - *The ability to set & achieve goals in the quest for excellence*
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Philosophy

The process of learning to dance is one of both intellectual understanding and physical accomplishment. Movement is learned through repetition until the body builds what we call "Muscle Memory." The muscle memory is what allows us to perform familiar but somewhat complex tasks like brushing our teeth without the brain sending a separate and specific instruction for each movement: "extend arm-open fingers-close fingers around toothbrush-pull hands to mouth-move hand to the right-move hand to the left, etc." Our lives are filled with many such sets of movements and actions for which we have developed muscle memory.

In the first years of ballet study, when every step and position is new, we begin by building on the natural movements and rhythms of childhood play such as bending, stretching, walking, jumping, swaying, and spinning. Under the guidance of our instructors, students then learn new positions and movements-repeating and refining them until each becomes part of the body's muscle memory. Because the positions and movements of classical ballet are so complex and precise, this process takes years of study.

Progress at MMDA is not defined by the accomplishment of one class or even one year of study. Our goal is to enable each student to reach his/her highest potential and we envision each student as having a unique chronology of progress that begins with the first class and continues until he/she stops dancing, at whatever age and level that might be.

Learning happens at different rates: there will be times when quick progress is made and plateaus when the mind and body assimilate recent learning and prepare for future growth. Instruction is individualized to best encourage and facilitate each student's development; and advancement through our levels is based, not on length of study, but on technical accomplishment, artistic development, emotional maturity, classroom interaction, personal work ethic and readiness for the challenges of the next level.

Being a dancer is not only a physical activity-it is a state of mind; and the longer one studies, the more each of the attributes is developed. The gifts of ballet training forever enrich who we are and remain with us throughout our lives.