Student Handbook 2023-2024
COMMITMENT TO DIVERSITY, EQUITY, AND INCLUSION

Ballet Chicago believes that a diverse student body is an essential component of who we are and have been since the school began in 1995. We welcome families and admit students of any race, color, national and ethnic origin to all the rights, privileges, programs, and activities made available to students at the school, and we consider the artistic representation of cultural and racial diversity as essential to the art form.

Ballet Chicago has a nondiscrimination policy with respect to all the rights, privileges, programs and activities generally accorded or made available to students at the School. Ballet Chicago does not discriminate on the basis of sex, race, color, sexual orientation, national origin, gender identity or any other protected characteristic in administration of its education policies, admissions policies, scholarship programs or any other school-administered programs.
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## 2022-2023 CALENDAR

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<td>Fall Semester Begins</td>
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<td>Saturday, September 9th</td>
<td>Bring a Friend to Class Day / Millennium Park Workshop</td>
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<td>Saturday, September 9th</td>
<td>BCSC Performance / Harris Theater 20th Anniversary</td>
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<td>Saturday, September 16th</td>
<td>Nutcracker Children’s Auditions &amp; Parent Coffee</td>
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<td>Friday, September 22nd</td>
<td>BCSC Mandatory Orientation Mtg. (Parents Welcome)</td>
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<td>Saturday, October 7th – 9th</td>
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<td>HAPPY HALLOWEEN (NO CHILDREN’S CLASS)</td>
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<td>Tuesday, November 7th</td>
<td>ELECTION DAY – (NO CLASS)</td>
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<td>Nutcracker Picture Day &amp; Nutcracker Boutique Opens</td>
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<td>Thursday, November 16th</td>
<td>Tree Lighting Ceremony – 900 N Michigan Shops</td>
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<td>Wednesday, November 22nd – 24th</td>
<td>THANKSGIVING BREAK (NO CLASS – BCSC)</td>
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<td>Wednesday, November 22nd – 26th</td>
<td>THANKSGIVING BREAK (NO CLASS – ALL OTHER)</td>
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<td>Monday, December 4th – 17th</td>
<td>Nutcracker at The Athenaeum (No regular classes)</td>
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MISSION STATEMENT

Ballet Chicago
...where artistic excellence and content of character forge the next generation.

Ballet Chicago’s mission is to educate and inspire young artists through the study of classical ballet, and in so doing, to lay a foundation of life skills that empowers each one to realize their full potential.

It is a place where the beauty of one’s character is as important as the beauty of one’s tendu, a place where diversity is intentional – where inner city, foster children, middle-class and those of great fortune stand side-by-side, although we will never tell you which is which.

It is a place where young people learn to celebrate their triumphs and weather their disappointments with equal grace, where high-achievement is the norm, and where delivering moments of truth becomes a way of life.

With a curriculum based in the Balanchine® Technique, and through a special arrangement with the George Balanchine Trust, Ballet Chicago provides an accelerated performance program where members receive years of on-stage experience, building confidence under pressure, camaraderie, community and an array of skill sets that translate to any arena. New works join masterpiece repertoire reserved solely for professionals and only the most accomplished students worldwide, producing outstanding performance resumes.

Ballet Chicago is a home, it is a family; it is a launching pad for exemplary youth.

THE SCHOOL OF BALLET CHICAGO

Ballet Chicago is an internationally recognized professional track school of ballet that creates exceptional dancers and people. Ballet Chicago believes every aspiring artist deserves the opportunity to explore his or her full potential, and is committed to making classical ballet training accessible to all talented students who have the desire to dance.

Co-founders Daniel Duell and Patricia Blair are devoted to carrying on Balanchine’s legacy by providing one of the highest caliber Balanchine-based curriculums in the nation. By teaching impeccable technique as well as fundamental life skills, Ballet Chicago students go on to find success in dance and life.
PROGRAMS

The Preparatory Division

Ballet Chicago’s Preparatory Division classes provide an inspired introduction to the arts with a focus on creativity, group interaction, motor skill development, and the joy of self-expression. For summer activity, Children’s Theme Camps are offered for Preparatory Division students.

- Creative Movement (ages 3-4)
- Pre-Ballet (4-5)
- Introduction to Ballet (age 5-7)

The Student Division

The Student Division consists of classes for Level 1 through Level 5 and includes our special Bravo Boys! classes. The curriculum is carefully stepped and provides students with the foundation necessary to pursue a career in classical ballet.

- Ballet 1 (ages 7-8) - no audition required
- Ballet 2 - audition required
- Ballet 3 - audition required
- Ballet 4 - audition required
- Ballet 5 - audition required

The Professional Division

Ballet Chicago’s Professional Division offers advanced training for those wishing to pursue a career in ballet. A comprehensive curriculum consisting of women’s technique and pointe, men’s technique and weight training, pas de deux, repertory, Pilates, and stretch classes. All Professional Division students attend several classes each day and have the opportunity to become members of the Ballet Chicago Studio Company. Special seminars in foot care, nutrition and injury prevention are also offered.

- Ballet 6 – audition required
- Ballet 7 – audition required
- Ballet 8 - audition required
- Advanced Men – audition required

Open Division

Ballet Chicago offers open adult classes for all levels during several evenings during the week in ballet, jazz, and tap. The fee for a single class is $15 for walk-ins. Enrolled Ballet Chicago students can attend open adult classes at a reduced fee of $5. Class cards are available.
DRESS CODE

Preparatory Division: Leotard or tutu in color of choice, pink or flesh colored tights, leather ballet slippers that match the color of the tights

Student Division:

- Wear Moi Faustine leotard
  - Ballet 1 - White leotard
  - Ballet 2 - Sky blue leotard
  - Ballet 3 - Mint leotard
  - Ballet 4 - Lilac leotard
  - Ballet 5 - French blue leotard
- Pink or flesh colored tights
- Leather ballet slippers that match the color of the tights
- Pointe shoes that match the color of the tights (Level 4 and up only, Level 4 will not be required to start the year with pointe shoes)

Professional Division (Levels 6,7,8): Wear Moi Faustine leotard in black (technique) and navy (pointe), Balkala dress in white (rehearsals), Wear Moi Divo3 pink or flesh colored tights OR Blendz Apparel fleshtone tights OR Discount Dance 1916C tights, leather ballet slippers that match the color of the tights, pointe shoes that match the color of the tights.

All Boys and Men: Wear Moi tights style Orion in medium grey, Wear Moi Alpin or Conrad shirt in white, white ballet socks, white leather ballet shoes.

Hair: Hair should be pulled back and secured out of the face. Longer hair should be pinned into a bun or a twist, and shorter hair should be neatly secured away from the face. Facial hair should be kept short and neatly trimmed.

Recommended Dance Supply Stores:

Wear Moi
www.wearmoi.us
3352 N. Broadway, Chicago, IL 60657
773-850-3119

Allegro Dance Boutique
www.allegrodanceboutique.com
2114 Central St, Evanston, IL 60201
847-733-8460

Chicago Dance Supply
www.chicagodancesupply.com
5301 N. Clark St., 2nd floor Chicago, IL 60640
773-728-5344

Discount Dance
www.discountdancesupply.com
Policies and Procedures

Code of Conduct

It is a policy of Ballet Chicago to promote a healthy and positive environment for all students and staff. Students are expected to behave in a responsible manner and are required to adhere to the School’s Policies and Procedures. Ballet Chicago reserves the right to dismiss any student whose conduct is found to be unsatisfactory.

The following are prohibited at Ballet Chicago:

- Verbal harassment, physical threats or intimidation, acts of violence of any kind
- Theft, destruction of school property or property of others
- Possession or use of alcohol and/or illegal drugs by any students attending the program
- Firearms or weapons of any kind
- Tobacco: Ballet Chicago facilities are designated non-smoking areas. Illinois State law prohibits persons under the age of 21 to smoke, and prohibits smoking in any public facility and within 30 feet of any building. This includes vaping, Jool, e-cigarettes, cannabis, etc.
- Photography or Videography in locker rooms or bathrooms
- Inappropriate use of the internet or social media
- Inappropriate use of cell phones
- Sexual harassment or assault. Any person who believes that they are a victim of harassment or assault should bring the matter to Ballet Chicago staff immediately.

Any student found violating federal, state, or local law and/or Ballet Chicago policies or codes of conduct will face immediate disciplinary action. Actions may include (but are not limited to) dismissal from the program, suspension, probation, or revocation of financial assistance or scholarships. All fees paid and/or owed on behalf of any dismissed student are forfeited.

Liability Waiver

Ballet training and the exercises associated with it places unusual stress on the body and carry with them the risk of physical injury. The School of Ballet Chicago, its faculty, staff or board members shall not be liable in any way for injuries sustained or illnesses contracted during attendance at the School or any of its related functions. It should also be understood that dance instruction involves kinetic corrections that may include physically touching students as part of regular class work and rehearsals.

Enrollment Policies

Once a student is enrolled, the parent / guardian is responsible for payment of all tuition fees for the entirety of the program. There are no refunds. The parent / guardian agrees that tuition will be paid using the payment plan they have selected, and that all tuition related expenses, such as performance and costume fees, will be paid on time. The parent / guardian also agrees to keep their portal up to date with current contact information, including phone, address, and email.

Financial aid applications are available upon request and must be completed by August 14th for the Fall Semester or January 1st for the Spring Semester. Determinations for financial aid are made on a yearly basis.
BUILDING RULES
Ballet Chicago is located in a public, multi-use building. Parents are responsible for accompanying young children to and from the 19th floor. Parents are welcome to wait for their children in the main reception area. Please refrain from entering other floors of the building. Please also refrain from entering staff offices, unoccupied studios, or the wardrobe room.

Students and visitors are responsible for keeping Ballet Chicago clean. This means keeping track of their personal belongings and disposing of any garbage (including lunch items, plastic bottles, toe tape, etc).

ATTIRE
Students must wear street clothes to and from the studio. Any dancer seen leaving the studio in just a leotard and tights will be asked to put on additional clothing.

PHOTO AND VIDEO
Personal photography or videography (including cell phone photos) is not permitted in any class, rehearsal or performance. Ballet Chicago shall not be liable in any way for images or footage that violate this policy.

PUBLICITY
Enrollment grants Ballet Chicago the permission to use photos and videos from classes, rehearsals, special events, and performances for the purposes of marketing the School and Ballet Chicago performances. Enrollment waives any rights of compensation or ownership thereto. Ballet Chicago promotional material is inclusive of, but not limited to, marketing materials, brochures, information packets, videos, website photos, dance related newspaper and magazine articles, Facebook, Instagram, etc.

ATTENDANCE
All class absences must be reported in advance via phone call or email to the School Administrator.

DRESSING ROOMS
Ballet Chicago has four dressing rooms: three female, one male. Lockers are available to dancers on a first come-first served basis.

INJURIES/MEDICAL LEAVE
Any dancer may request a medical leave of absence for physical or psychological reasons. The leave of absence must be corroborated by a doctor’s note and submitted to the School Administrator for approval. Return to ballet must also be approved by a doctor and the Ballet Chicago faculty and staff.

Student injuries must be disclosed to the faculty and should not be hidden in order to retain a performance opportunity. Injuries can endanger the dancer’s long-term health and career options, and the dancer will not be punished for coming forward. Injured students in the Student and Professional Divisions should observe all classes.

CAREER COUNSELING
Counseling in preparation for the annual audition process is offered to all eligible students. One-on-one meetings provide assistance with researching companies to audition for, as well as assembling all needed collateral: resumes, photos, video footage and cover letters. Career counseling meetings should be scheduled through the School Director.

STUDENT EVALUATIONS
Evaluations with the faculty to discuss the dancer’s progression can be scheduled by appointment. All evaluation requests should be made through the School Administrator.
COMMUNICATION
Ballet Chicago uses a variety of communication tools to keep students and families up to date:

- Email is the primary method of communication to parents and students. Please keep your email addresses updated and be sure to opt in for email blasts to receive information. Also be sure to check your junk/spam folders for emails.
- Weekly updates include important information. They are sent out every Friday at 5pm.
- The Call Board is the central tool for information, including class, rehearsal and performance schedules, casting assignments, ticketing and promotional information, and special events.
- The Parent Portal of our website requires a username and password (supplied to you by Ballet Chicago), in order to gain access. Parents can access their financial records and other links via the Parent Portal.
- Safety and security is of the utmost priority at Ballet Chicago. In the event of an emergency or cancellation of classes, communication will be sent as soon as possible by both email and text message to the contact information in the Parent Portal.

Please note that schedules are subject to change, especially during performance season, so please check the call board and email communication frequently. You are responsible for your own schedule.

HARASSMENT AND BULLYING
It is important that all members of the Ballet Chicago community (faculty, staff, students, and families) recognize that behavior, either verbal or physical, which disregards or demeans the self-esteem of others is unacceptable. Any individuals engaging in such behaviors will be subject to disciplinary action, which may include suspension, expulsion, or dismissal without advance notice. Other examples of misconduct include: cyber bullying; theft, physical or verbal aggression; or possession, distribution, or use of illegal drugs. We rely on all of our staff, faculty, pianists, students, and families to work proactively to build and maintain a safe and nurturing environment.

ACADEMIC POLICY
Ballet Chicago supports the academic endeavors of its students and encourages high school age dancers to pursue college applications, regardless of their goal to pursue dance as a career option. It is very common for dance companies to support dancers who are interested in part-time college work while performing full time.

PRIVATE INSTRUCTION
As a standing practice Ballet Chicago teaches its students through its regularly scheduled group classes and rehearsals. Private lessons beyond the regular curriculum may be given only with the full knowledge and approval of the Directors. Discussion between the faculty member requesting the private lessons and the Directors must take place in order to evaluate and decide on each request.
CASTING POLICIES
Participating students and parents are required to adhere to the following Casting Guidelines:

- Casting is the sole and singular responsibility of the Artistic Directors of Ballet Chicago.
- Questioning of casting by parents or dancers will not be permitted.
- A parent’s role is to support their child’s self-esteem regardless of their child’s disappointment over casting. Being able to weather disappointments is part of the process. Please make sure to express to your child that there are no small parts in a show, every dancer on stage is important.
- Dancers will often perform the same roles several years in a row. It is very important to manage such expectations for your dancer.
- All discussion of casting should be kept positive. Dancers should be supportive of others’ success.
- Being an understudy is an important position, and a benefit in that the dancer gets to learn extra choreography. Illnesses and injuries happen unpredictably, and an understudy may be called to perform the given role at a moment’s notice. Understudies are essential for any production; it is an important task.
- Learning assignments for roles during the rehearsal process are not final casting, but a way to prepare dancers for the future and should be seen as a positive experience. Students will often learn choreography for more roles than they will end up dancing.
- A full commitment to class, rehearsal and costume fitting schedules is required.
- Casting is subject to change at any time.
- Parents are not permitted to approach or accost any member of Ballet Chicago’s faculty, administration, or Artistic Staff about casting.

DONOR INTERACTION POLICY
While Ballet Chicago has many donors whose support is highly valued, Ballet Chicago does not permit donors to interact with students by email, phone, letter, social media, or in person unless accompanied and/or approved by a Ballet Chicago senior staff member and the parent(s) of the dancer. Should a donor reach out to you in any of these ways, you must let a senior staff person know as soon as possible so that the Development Associate or the or the Artistic/Executive Director may speak with the donor to remind them of our policies. Furthermore, Ballet Chicago students are very recognizable at events, in the theater, and the area surrounding the studio and students should not engage in extended conversation with ballet fans or Ballet Chicago donors during these events or elsewhere. If you or a parent ever have questions or concerns about anyone who approaches you, be sure to report them immediately to a senior staff member.
PERFORMANCE OPPORTUNITIES

The Preparatory Division

- The Nutcracker (December 2023)
- Annual School Performance (May 2024)

The Student Division

- The Nutcracker (December 2023)
- Spring Repertory (May 2024)
- Annual School Performance (May 2024)

The Professional Division

- DanceVision (October/November 2023)
- The Nutcracker (December 2023)
- Spring Repertory (May 2024)
- Annual School Performance (May 2024)

DanceVision

Each fall, Ballet Chicago’s DanceVision fosters the making of new works by bringing together young choreographers, Ballet Chicago students, and live music played by talented young musicians through our collaboration with the Merit School of Music.

The Nutcracker

The Nutcracker is an exciting holiday tradition that has been performed for over a century. Participating in The Nutcracker is a wonderful experience and an invaluable part of a young dancer’s education. This year marks our 26th Nutcracker and our 21st anniversary performing The Nutcracker at the Athenaeum Center.

Spring Repertory

This annual spring opportunity to witness onstage the ongoing goal of our training is one not to be missed. As our series main title Balanchine + Beyond suggests, Spring Repertory offers Studio Company dancers the opportunity to perform Balanchine® ballets as well as original works by our Artistic Director, Resident Choreographer, and guest choreographers.

Annual School Performance

Demonstrating their progress made during the year, students enrolled in Creative Movement through Ballet VIII perform in the School of Ballet Chicago’s Annual School Performance. The School advises parents and students that participation is critical to each dancer’s development.
Supporting Ballet Chicago

Ballet Chicago is a not-for-profit organization, and tuition covers less than 50% of the cost of operating our school. We are a school that provides exceptional performing opportunities for students, more than anyone in the region. Major expense categories include theater and production costs, scholarships and financial aid, faculty and pianists, staff, and building operations.

Donations from the Ballet Chicago community, both past and present, are vital to the organization. Families can donate through various means:

- Performance Sponsorships
- Masterworks Society Membership
- Fall Fundraiser
- Nutcracker Gifts
- Calendar end-of-year Appeal
- Spring Gala and Paddle Raise
- Fiscal end-of-year Appeal

The money raised from these drives is essential in helping us bridge the gap between tuition and the much higher actual cost of operating Ballet Chicago. Visit www.balletchicago.org to view giving options and donor benefits or to make your donation easily and securely online.

There is no relationship between parents’ donations to the School and a student’s progress in Ballet Chicago classes or in performance casting.