



PARENT/STUDENT HANDBOOK

MCDONALD DANCE ACADEMY

A studio dedicated to teaching correct dance technique,
theory and terminology for beginning through advanced students.

REVISED: 7/14


MCDONALD DANCE ACADEMY PARENT/STUDENT HANDBOOK

Welcome to McDonald Dance Academy! This handbook has been developed to answer many of the Frequently Asked questions about the studio. Please feel free to call us at any time with any question.

STUDIO ADDRESS:

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www.McDonaldDance.com



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STUDIO PHILOSOPHY

McDonald Dance Academy offers high quality instruction in all areas of dance. We employ only the finest instructors, provide a nice, clean facility and workable class sizes so that students receive personal instruction at a reasonable cost.

At McDonald Dance Academy, our classes are designed to stimulate the enjoyment of dance while laying an important foundation for further training. As the student advances, the variety and intensity of the class work increases. Many of our students have gone on to careers in dance, while other students participate in dance for the exercise and pure enjoyment of the art form. We offer classes for beginning through advanced students, ages three through adult.




MISSION STATEMENT

McDonald Dance Academy is a studio dedicated to teaching correct dance technique, theory and terminology for beginning through advanced students of all ages. We do not believe in over inflated prices for a lot of show. We believe in teaching the basics of the art form to provide a solid foundation both mentally and physically. This foundation enables the student to understand and perform dance at any level. It allows the student to appreciate the true beauty of the art form.

The teaching staff at McDonald Dance Academy is comprised of vibrant and energetic teachers who are well trained in the field of dance. They understand what it takes to be a good dancer and make it a priority to pass that knowledge on to their students.

Our students are our first priority. It is our goal that they receive a positive and excellent education in dance.




TEACHING STAFF

The teaching staff at McDonald Dance Academy is chosen with great care. All of our instructors have either a college degree in dance, have danced professionally or are currently performing with a professional dance ensemble. We do not allow high school students or inexperienced teachers to teach classes. We have regular staff meetings where we discuss curriculum and teaching methods. Teachers monitor and discuss students' progress across each of the disciplines to make sure that each student is performing to the best of his or her ability. Our staff strives to give each student the individual attention and instruction he or she needs to reach their potential.


Each of our teachers brings a unique perspective, personality and skill set to the classroom environment. Students benefit from these differing approaches and environments as they mirror the professional environment dancers will encounter throughout their dance career.

We are fortunate that the Chicago area is rich with wonderful dance teachers and make a concerted effort to expose our dancers to them. Throughout the year, we offer Master Classes by local choreographers and dance instructors and encourage our students to take advantage of these classes. Please check out the bulletin boards in each of the studios for information about these opportunities.




STUDIO DESIGN

Our studios are designed for the dancer. Our new facility has 4 studios, each with suspended wood floors. We also offer a dressing room, 3 bathrooms, lost and found bins and bulletin boards to keep you apprised of studio announcements and information about the dance world.



CLASS STRUCTURE

All of our classes have a consistent structure, whether it is ballet, tap, jazz, modern or hip hop. The instructor begins with barre work or center warm ups. This warm up is not the same as stretching. It is the basis of the specific dance technique the student is learning. Similar in learning to spell, a student first needs to know the alphabet. Each step used in the warm up is used later in the class as part of the center work or part of the work across the floor. For example, pliés (bending of the knees) are done at the beginning of each ballet class. Pliés are then used each time the dancers jumps and as preparation for many types of turns. If pliés are done incorrectly, the dancer risks injury. We, therefore, use the beginning of each class to establish correct placement and execution of pliés. We encourage parents to attend our Parent Visitation Days to learn more about the class structure and ask any questions you may have.



CLASS DESCRIPTIONS

At McDonald Dance Academy, we offer 5 types of dance. Below is a brief description of each dance form. All our classes are divided into different levels, which are based on a student's ability. We believe that it is important for a student to be placed appropriately so they may get the most out of a class. Placement is done by the instructor. New students should take our placement class so the teacher may evaluate them properly.

BALLET is the basis for all dance forms. It teaches the strong foundation and terminology that is needed by all dancers. It is danced to classical music. Our curriculum is based on the Cecchetti technique.

PRE-BALLET WITH TAP is a program designed for students ages 3 - 6 years. This program takes the basics of ballet technique and through the use of props and imagination, gives the children a fun and educational class. Large motor skills are highlighted as well as stimulating the brain's coordination. All of the pre-ballet classes end with tap, where rhythms and smaller motor skills are emphasized. *Children must be 3 years old by the start of the session and fully toilet trained.*

½ BALLET, ½ TAP is our higher level Pre-Ballet program. Each student receives a full ½ hour of ballet and a full ½ hour of tap. This class is offered for students age 5 - 7 years old.

POINTE is an extended form of ballet. A student must reach a certain age and level before they are ready for Pointe based on a list of criteria. Pointe shoes are required and must be approved by the teacher. Two ballet classes a week are required to build strength in the legs, torso and ankles. *All Pointe students must have prior approval of the studio's director.*

JAZZ is a more funky form of dance. The body is used in many different ways and is not as restricted as in ballet. Jazz is danced to more popular music. *Students must be 7 years old by the start of the session.*


HIP HOP is the style of dance often seen in the music videos on MTV. While jazz dance is heavily incorporated, pedestrian movements are stylized and included in combinations that are performed to upbeat music. Jazz experience is strongly recommended.

MODERN/CONTEMPORARY is based off ballet but is not as funky as Jazz or Hip-Hop. Modern uses a greater range of body movements by the use of energy, breath phrasing, fall and rebound contraction and release. Humphrey-Limon, Cunningham, Hawkins, and Release are among the techniques used. Improvisation is integrated into this class, as well. Modern dance is wonderful for finding a dancer's center placement and strength. Various forms of music are used.

TAP is a form of dance that deals with rhythms of the feet. Many types of music are used. Jazz tap shoes are required for Level 1 and higher.

MUSICAL THEATER is a performance class during which students will sample several styles of dance used in Broadway musicals and Hollywood movies. It emphasizes classic and stylized Jazz in the high energy fashion of some of the greats like Bob Fosse and Jerome Robbins.

WORKSHOPS & MASTER CLASSES are offered throughout the year. We encourage every dancer to take advantage of this opportunity to study with a guest teacher who has exceptional credentials and provides our dancers with the opportunity to learn new and different techniques. We feel it is important for our students to be exposed to different styles of teaching as it makes the dancer a more well-rounded dancer. Master classes will be made available periodically throughout the year and registration information and requirements will be posted in each studio.



DRESS CODE

Our dress code was established to promote the students' freedom of movement and the instructor's observation of correct technique. We have differentiated the Ballet levels by the color of leotard. First, this color distinction gives the student a sense of accomplishment as the dancer moves up in levels and graduates to a new color of leotard. Secondly, it allows us to choose from a wider color palette for our *Day of Dance* costumes. Our costumes for the *Day of Dance* are created by accessorizing the students' leotards. Hair should be worn off the face and neck, in a bun if possible. This enhances the dancer's vision and enables the instructor to observe proper alignment of neck and shoulders.

PRE-BALLET WITH TAP	Pink leotard, pink tights, pink LEATHER ballet slippers and black patent leather tap shoes
½ BALLET, ½ TAP	Pink leotard, pink tights, pink LEATHER ballet slippers and black patent leather tap shoes
BALLET 1 - 2	Light blue leotard, pink tights, pink ballet slippers
BALLET 3 - 4	Royal blue leotard, pink tights, pink ballet slippers
BALLET 5- 6	Hunter green leotard, pink tights, pink ballet slippers
BALLET 7 - 8	Lavender leotard, pink tights, pink ballet slippers
BALLET 9 - 10	Maroon leotard, pink tights, pink ballet slippers
BALLET 10	Black leotard, pink tights, pink ballet slippers
JAZZ/HIP HOP	Black leotard, black jazz pants, black jazz shoes
MUSICAL THEATER	Black leotard, black jazz pants, black jazz shoes
TAP	Solid leotard, black jazz pants, jazz tap shoes
MODERN/CONTEMPORARY ...	Solid leotard, bare feet, black jazz pants or footless tights

*** No baggy t-shirts or shorts allowed in Jazz or Modern. No biking shorts or print leotards allowed in Ballet.*

CLASS PLACEMENT

CLASS LEVELS are divided into levels based on a student's ability, not necessarily by age (except for students under 8 years old).

We divide our levels into three categories:

Beginning (Level 1 – Level 4)

Intermediate (Level 5 – Level 8)


Advanced (Level 9 – Level 10).

The usual progression is Level 1, Level 2, Level 3...with each number representing a new level. Unlike grade levels in school, students do not necessarily move to the next level each year. We have a great deal of curriculum to cover in each level and we want to make sure that the student is comfortable, strong, confident and technically correct before moving up. Some students may take a Level for a couple of years, others may move through a Level in less time. The determination is made on an individual basis by the instructor. Each student progresses at his or her own pace. Students advance to more challenging levels as they safely master the requisite skills and techniques, not specific combinations. Please be patient and encouraging with your child. Dance is an art form and cannot be rushed.

Often our levels do not coincide with other studios. Some studios have three levels while others may offer 10. To compare levels, it is important to look at the curriculum not the number of years of training. A copy of our curriculum by level is available through the office.

STUDENT PLACEMENT We believe that it is important for a student to be placed appropriately so that he/she can get the most out of the class. Our instructors take a personal interest in each student. Initial student evaluation involves determining a student's present ability in light of previous dance experience, individual skill and muscle development. New students age 8 and younger should register for a class according to our age guidelines. New

students who would like to register for a Ballet, Jazz or Tap class above our entry Level 1 or 2 should attend our placement class. Please contact the studio for information about our placement class. Our instructors closely monitor the progress of each student to maximize the benefits of their dance training while minimizing the risk of physical strain.



STUDIO POLICIES

TUITION is payable in advance and **must** accompany the registration form. We accept MasterCard, Visa, Discover, Checks or Cash. A payment plan is available, requiring three payments: 33% due with registration followed by two additional payments each of 33% due on the first of the next 2 months. Please inquire if you are interested. Returned checks are subject to a \$30.00 fee.

CREDITS expire one year from date of issue and are non-transferable.

REFUNDS are not made once a session is underway unless the studio must cancel a class.

ABSENCE/MAKE-UP CLASSES We encourage consistent attendance. The curriculum is ongoing and cumulative. If a student misses too many classes, he/she will fall behind and be frustrated. We understand that conflicts or illness may cause dancers to miss a class and we have established a make-up policy to address this situation. A dancer may make-up a maximum of 3 missed classes in a single class. The make-up class should be in a similar class of the same level or lower. For example, a dancer enrolled in Ballet 3 may make-up in a Ballet 2 or Ballet 3 class but not a Ballet 4, as this class is a full level higher. Missed classes cannot be made up in subsequent semesters. Classes not made up will be forfeited. All students attending a make-up class must sign in at the front desk.

MEDICAL SITUATIONS In the case of medical condition which prevents a student from dancing and exists for 30 days or more, a credit will be issued toward the next semester under the following conditions: 1) a letter must be presented from a doctor stating the medical condition and the number of days a dancer is unable to participate in class; 2) a credit, determined by the number of days as indicated by the doctor, will be issued toward tuition for the subsequent semester only and cannot be carried over to subsequent semesters; and 3) dancers, if physically unable to participate in class, must continue to attend and observe their classes so they do not fall behind in the curriculum.

AGE GUIDELINES Students must meet all age guidelines by September 1. The September date applies to both the fall and spring semesters. We do not promote mid-year even if a child's birthday falls during the school year. For our Pre-Ballet program, children must be 3

years old and fully toilet-trained (no pull ups). We offer a class in January for children who turn 3 between September 1 and December 31.

REGISTRATION is on a first come, first served basis. Returning students are given priority during the first three weeks of fall registration. All registrations are processed in the order received. Class size limitations will be strictly observed and we do not hold spots for Returning Students, so please register as soon as possible. After the priority registration, ALL registrations (for new and returning students) are processed in the order received. Registration confirmations are not sent. You will be notified only if we cannot register you for the class your requested. We require a minimum of 5 students to run a class.

LOST ITEMS Please label all belongings. A lost and found box can be found in the studio's dressing area. All valuables should be taken into the classroom with you. The studio cannot be held responsible for lost items.

TARDINESS All students are expected to arrive on time and in the appropriate attire. We understand that circumstances may delay you, sometimes. If you are more than 10 minutes late, you may be asked to sit and watch the class. Classes are designed to warm up muscles slowly and properly. Jumping into a class that has already started may cause injury. If you are tardy, please see the instructor, apologize for your late arrival and ask him/her whether you can join the class or watch. Please respect your instructor's decision in this matter; they are only looking out for the student's best interest.

PHOTOGRAPHS OF STUDENTS From time to time, we may take photographs of students enrolled at the studio. These photographs may be used in our promotional material, social media or website and are for our use only. Please inform the office if you do not want your or your child's image used.

By submitting your registration, you are indicating that you accept our policies as detailed on our website.

INCLEMENT WEATHER


The safety of our student, teachers and parents is of utmost concern. If the weather is bad (snow, ice, or dangerously cold), we may cancel classes. Generally, we follow District 25 weather closures. Sometimes, however, the weather and roads may clear in time for our afternoon classes. Classes missed because of weather closures may be made up in a similar class according to our make up policy. Classes will not be rescheduled and refunds cannot be offered.

Please call the studio or check our website, www.McDonaldDance.com, for Inclement Weather updates. We cannot make individual phone calls.



PARENTAL INVOLVEMENT

We encourage parental involvement by sending home regular newsletters with information about important studio news and events. Each semester, parents are invited to a Parent Visitation class. Please remember that this is a class and we ask that you observe discreetly and respectfully. Younger siblings may find it difficult to sit through an entire class, so please consider making other arrangements. If a parent cannot attend the Parent Visitation class, we encourage him/her to make arrangements with the instructor to observe another time. We want parents to observe their child's progress and to offer encouragement and praise for his/her accomplishments.




HEALTH

We encourage our dancers to be healthy. Dancers are athletes and should treat their bodies accordingly. A dancer's body is his/her instrument. Please encourage your child to eat healthfully. Dancers need to be aware of their weight as an overweight dancer can put undue stress on joints and muscles causing injuries. An overweight student dancing on Pointe can severely damage her Achilles tendon, knees and toes. We may take students off Pointe shoes until she can maintain an appropriate weight for her frame. We are also very attuned to the damage that anorexia and bulimia can cause. If a dancer is too skinny from malnutrition, her body can sustain tremendous damage. Damage can occur not only to the skeleton and muscles, but to internal organs as well.

Finally, be sure your dancer gets the appropriate amount of sleep. Muscles are repaired during the REM cycle. Additionally, insufficient sleep reduces the blood flow that can adversely affect the dancer's ability leading to injury.

If a student is sick, please do not attend class. We do not want the dancer to end up sicker and we want to minimize the transmission of disease.



DANCE PERFORMANCE

We conclude each year with a *Day of Dance*, which is modeled in the tradition of the French School of Ballet. Emphasis is not on elaborate costumes, but on the skills and techniques, which the students have mastered over the course of their education. The performance consists of short dances choreographed from steps that the students have been working on all year. Students begin learning the pieces after Spring Break, in the second semester.

Dance is a performance art, however, we understand that some students do not wish to participate in the performing aspect of dance. We do not want to pressure anyone to do something they are uncomfortable with. Once your child has committed to the recital, we expect the dancer to attend class on a regular basis. Good classroom attendance is vital to the choreography of the piece and to developing a strong working relationship with the other dancers in the piece. This relationship helps the student feel comfortable, confident and relaxed on stage. There is nothing more frightening to a student than being on stage in front of hundreds of people and not know what he/she is doing.

Only a portion of class time is dedicated to learning the recital dance. If you choose not to participate in the recital, please continue to attend class as we will continue to introduce new material from the curriculum. Additionally, those students who choose not to participate in the recital will still learn the dance with the entire class. Learning a routine helps the dancer understand sequencing and timing. While participation in our Day of Dance is not mandatory, we find that the chance to perform is a rewarding and confidence building experience. Please notify the instructor *and* the office in writing by March 1 if your dancer will not be participating in the May recital.

DRESS REHEARSALS are scheduled prior to the Day of Dance and are designed to help the dancer understand the expectations for the performance. It helps the dancer get his/her bearings on stage, develop a level of comfort in front of an audience and allows teachers to set the lighting, finalize blocking and address any costuming issues. Dress rehearsal should be a priority for every dancer. Please note, that we do not allow siblings to attend the Dress Rehearsal. Please make other arrangements for both younger children and any child who is not scheduled to rehearse at that time, whether or not he/she is a dancer at the studio.

COSTUMES It is the studio's philosophy not to dress dancers in elaborate costumes. We believe in simply highlighting the dancer. We are more interested in showing off our students, than a costume. Big elaborate costumes have a tendency to distract from what the audience is seeing. Therefore, our costumes are simple and will accessorize the level color leotard. Costumes must be ordered by December to guarantee delivery by recital. Consequently, costume payments are due in December. The costume fee is \$30 per class and is nonrefundable.

TICKETS Each audience member is required to purchase a ticket for our *Day of Dance* performance. Ticket sales cover the cost of the theater rental, stage technicians, program printing and much more.

THE ARLINGTON DANCE ENSEMBLE

The Arlington Dance Ensemble is our performing group. Our Ensemble is composed of well rounded, dedicated young dancers between the ages of 10 and 18 who want to make a commitment to their art. The purpose of the *Ensemble* is to give dancers an opportunity to take what they have learned in the classroom and perform in the area. Each winter, the *Ensemble* hosts a Gala and every spring it hosts the Dance for Dreams concert to benefit a local charity. The *Ensemble* also performs during the year at various local events: Frontier Days, Metropolis “Dance Week”, as well as other functions and retirement homes.

Participation in the Ensemble is determined through auditions held in September and requires an additional fee. Auditions are open to any dancer enrolled in Level 4 or higher. The level of the dancers auditioning will determine the level of experience required to participate in Ensemble. All members ***must take a ballet class*** plus another technique (i.e. Jazz, Modern or Tap) in addition to their scheduled Ensemble rehearsals that will take place on the weekends. There is an annual fee associated with Ensemble that is determined at the beginning of every year. The fee covers the cost of costumes, choreography, rehearsals, master classes, theater rentals, lighting and other items associated with performing.

Rehearsal times are determined by the individual choreographers and therefore a dancer’s rehearsal schedule is determined by the pieces in which he/she is cast. Consequently, not all dancers will be called to every Ensemble rehearsal. However, dancers are expected to be a his/her designated rehearsal. If too many rehearsals are missed, the dancer ***will be*** replaced in the piece.

DANCE SUPPLIES

RETAILERS

D & G DANCEWEAR (847) 834-5214

Located inside McDonald Dance Academy

25 S. Dunton, Arlington Heights

Owners: Pat Doyle and Laura Gates

Mondays..... 3:30 - 6:00 p.m.

Wednesdays 3:30 - 6:00 p.m.

Fridays..... 3:30 - 6:00 p.m.

Saturdays..... 9:00 - noon

TOE THE LINE..... (847) 818-9800

1493 W. Dundee, Buffalo Grove

DANCE ‘N TEES..... (847) 884-5924

1065 N. Salem, Schaumburg

MOTIONS UNLIMITED..... (312) 922-3330

218 S. Wabash, Chicago

MIMI’S DANCE ‘N THINGS..... (847) 390-3897

1616 Linden, Des Plaines

WEBSITES

www.discountdance.com



STAFF

Linda McDonald Director, Ballet, Jazz, Modern/Contemporary
Jeanette Aylward..... Pre-Ballet, Ballet, Jazz
Cheryl Cavey..... Hip Hop
Jen Cobb..... Ballet, Jazz, Modern
Madelyn Doyle..... Jazz, Hip Hop
Pat Doyle..... Pre-Ballet, Tap, Jazz, Musical Theater
Kelly Dziurgot Pre-Ballet, Ballet, Modern/Contemporary, Jazz
Heather Fraelick..... Ballet, Jazz, Modern
Laura Gates Ballet, Jazz, Modern/Contemporary
Kate Goddard-Vandivier... Ballet, Jazz, Modern
Katie Calandra Kritek Pre-Ballet, Modern, Ballet
Leah McClure..... Ballet, Jazz, Modern
Kara McDonald..... Ballet, Jazz, Modern
Mark Yonally Tap
Lynne Losh Office Administrator

