

Stites Performing Arts Centre Handbook

Welcome to the Stites Center! We ask all parents and students to review the practices and policies of Stites Center. After reading this, if you have any questions, let us know and we'll be happy to explain and clear up any questions or misunderstandings. Please note that this is continually updated to reflect current policies and input from parents, dancers and other customers.

Instructors:

Our faculty is made up of highly trained and well-qualified instructors. Some have had prestigious professional careers; **all** have spent their lives training, studying, and *living* dance. Take a moment to read the resume portfolio that includes condensed but informative information about our instructors. A resume portfolio is generally left in the waiting area for your convenience.

Please introduce yourself to your dancer's instructor. Share information with them that will help facilitate your dancer's learning, i.e., new developments, emotional issues, health or in their life/home changes that will help instructors communicate more effectively with them. You can arrange a conference with a faculty member if you wish to consult about training, career goals, professional opportunities, student progress or other issues. To set up a conference, please talk with someone in the office or the instructor, and a time will be arranged.

Communication:

It is next to impossible to be sure that hundreds of students receive and take home all of the information passed out at the studio. The best way we can assure you are all well informed is to request that every week you check the center board for important information. Events and activities will always be posted at least 2 weeks and usually 3 to 4 weeks in advance. Another way to assure you receive information is to ask the instructor on viewing week about current information. Also ask your dancer if written information was passed out.

Placement of Students:

We are primarily a technical school, placing emphasis on learning each dance subject thoroughly and with correct technique. We believe students should strive for their personal best and not compare themselves to others. When placed in a class, the student will be observed by the teacher for a period of time before a decision is made whether the student should stay in that class or be moved to a class better suited for the individual's skill and progress level. This is a decision that only the teacher can make — not the secretary, parent or student.

Tuition:

Our tuition is based on a year round school year. Monthly, term and yearly payment plans are available. Please inquire in the office for specific payment plan options and prices. If you are paying by the monthly plan, keep in mind that months short a lesson day are balanced by a month with an extra lesson day. Term and yearly plans are more economical to reflect a savings in bookkeeping. We also offer a Discount Dance Series for an additional savings. In July, the schedule changes to accommodate vacations and dancers wanting to experiment with a new dance form. Intermediate and advanced classes will have *numerous* rehearsals that more than compensate for a missed class or two. The rest of the studio will also have extra rehearsals around recital time.

Of course, we are frequently asked about our ***price structure*** and this question comes up with some regularity in December. Specifically, the question is: "Why do you charge full rate during a month when one or two classes are missed due to Winter Break?" Here's the explanation.

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We base our tuition structure on a school year cycle. Dance classes are billed at a *yearly* rate, then divided into *equal term or monthly payments for your convenience*. Billing on a term or monthly basis actually represents a discount for you as compared to what the cost would be per class. Some months of the year, there are 5 class days, while in others, there are only 3 class days. Because we are closed for two weeks during December, that really sticks out to some people and seems unfair, however, it only appears this way when one looks at it as a *monthly* system as opposed to a yearly system.

Please keep in mind that this is a *yearly* system with a yearly tuition basis broken down into term and monthly payments for your convenience. (For clarity's sake, imagine the organizational and bookkeeping nightmare to re-structure monthly tuition fees during certain months. Consider the scenario of a family in which the female child takes classes on Monday, Wednesday and Friday, the male child takes class on Tuesdays, and the mother takes classes on Saturday morning. We could certainly figure out the particulars for tuition for each family member (based on how many class days were during that month) and the appropriate discounts, however to do this in a timely fashion would be nearly impossible!

If you decide to drop out in December, but plan on returning in January, a bookkeeping fee of \$10.00 will be added to your January payment in fairness to everyone as well as the additional bookkeeping issues. *To save a spot in class, the regular tuition needs to be paid.*

Hopefully, this makes a little clearer to you the tuition structure at Stites. Merleen Stites implemented this tuition structure many years ago and we have continued this practice. Please talk with Shanon if you have further questions. *If you are still uncomfortable with your fees or the number of classes your child is receiving, stop by the office and arrange for a make-up class.*

If you decide to drop out of class, please let both the office and your teacher know — the teacher is not the bookkeeper, so you may continue to be billed if the office is not informed. If it becomes necessary to drop out temporarily, be sure to consult with your teacher to make sure it will be possible to re-enter the same class. If the class will have progressed too far in the absence, other arrangements may need to be made. Remember, in fairness to all and to absorb extra bookkeeping expenses, a \$10.00 re-registration fee is added to your next month's payment. For classes that strictly limit enrollment, you can hold your spot by paying for the month you will be gone.

Absences:

When a dancer needs to be absent, dancers or their parent are expected to call and leave a message for their instructor. Upon returning to class, check the centerboard and with the instructor to see if you missed any information. Missed Lessons should be made up within a month in a class of equal ability. ***There are no credits or refunds for missed lessons.*** Inform the office and teacher if you will be attending a make-up class. If you do not follow this procedure, we will not know to notify you if that class is cancelled or the time is changed. Try to arrange make-up classes the week before rather than ask the office to "call you back." Sometimes it just isn't possible to call everyone back!

Parental Support is very important, but when a parent watches class, it is distracting, especially to very young children. During class they should be trying to please their teacher, not the parent. If a child is always looking to the parent for approval, she/he will miss some very important points. The teachers should have the authority during class time. This does not mean that a parent should never watch class, but once a month is usually considered acceptable by instructors and, additionally, you will be able to see progress better that way.

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The Viewing Room is not intended for children unaccompanied by an adult or boyfriends or girlfriends. *It is also not a waiting area for students in the next class.* This rule is for the safety of your children as well as for adult students. We have had people walk in and watch class who have no connection with anyone in the studio, so we try to screen everyone who views the class. *Please check in with the office when going to the viewing room.* The viewing room is not soundproof - please do not visit while viewing class. **The viewing room is open to viewers during the last class of the month, except from April to June, while preparing for our annual spring reviews. Please - no food or drink in the viewing room.** For the 2 smallest studios, viewing should be done from the doorway when the door is open. Also, the instructors will invite parents in for a portion of class. **DO NOT go into these 2 rooms to view unless specifically invited. They are too small for extra bodies.**

The viewing room is open the last week of each month (beginning the week of the last Monday of the month) so that parents and other family member can watch their dancer's progress. The viewing room is closed other weeks during each month to enhance the dancer's experience and education in the studio. Allowing dancers to be away from their parents facilitates growth and independence and teaches dancers how to interact in a class setting. Visitors in the viewing room can cause dancers to pay more attention to those people in the viewing room than to their teachers, and can also be distracting to the other students and the instructor.

Waiting Area:

Waiting areas are provided for dancers and visitors on non-viewing days outside the gym or in the area outside of the office. *Please DO NOT wait outside of the front studio and consequently block the front door.* (Exception: sitting on the bench!) This causes congestion by the front door and poses a safety hazard. Like the viewing room, the area outside the studio is also not sound-proof. Please keep voices low, especially on days when the studio is crowded.

Siblings are also welcome to wait for dancers, but only under the supervision of an adult. **ALL CHILDREN MUST BE QUIET AND WALK AT ALL TIMES.** Whenever possible, bring quiet activities, such as books or coloring books, for children to keep busy. This is a great time to read to waiting siblings! Toys are available, but please return when they are done. And remember, please have your children keep their voices low! Consider taking a walk if children become rambunctious or want to be active.

Studio Protocol:

- * Water only in the dance studios. Sticky floors are no fun to dance on and also unsafe.
- * Please instruct children that the studio is not a playground and that loud noise and running in the hall can be very distracting in the studios. **WALK!!**
- * Children should be told to wait *inside* the building to be picked up after class, not outside in the parking lot.
- * **Absolutely NO FOOD is allowed in the studio.** If any food *is* brought in the studio, put it away and to take all wrappers and remains home with you. We apologize for this inconvenience, but we have had difficulty with ants, odor, as well as messes left behind!
- * Young children, approximately age 6 and under, need to be escorted to the restroom.

Feedback:

We make every attempt to tell students when they are doing well. Sometimes we will offer constructive criticism or suggestions for improvement. Please understand **this is a compliment** and that your dancer is being noticed. This information is provided so that you can *help your child accept criticism* in the positive manner in which it is intended.

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Discipline in class is seldom a problem, but if a child disturbs the rest of the class and is interfering with instruction, she/he may be asked to take a brief time out or to leave class until she/he decides to refocus. If you feel you need a conference with a teacher, write the teacher a note, or let the office know so that a conference can be arranged.

Students are expected to be ready for class on time with proper clothing and hair appropriate for each dance subject (see section on attire). Arriving approximately 10 minutes early allows for social time, focusing and last minute preparations such as fixing hair, using restroom and putting on dance shoes. For intermediate and advanced classes, if a student is more than 10 minutes late for class, the teacher may ask the student to do warm-ups independently before joining the class, or to sit out and watch. The reasons are:

- * Student safety. With proper warm up, injuries can be avoided.
- * Latecomers disturb the concentration of the students and teacher.
- * Students who arrive at the last minute do not have time to go to the bathroom, wash hands, put on dance clothes and shoes and say hello to friends. It can be *very* upsetting to the child.

Please help your child be on time to each class, as being late is very embarrassing to even the youngest child.

Students, in the "older" classes are taught that they should come into the classroom and begin warming up their bodies as soon as it is class time. They should do this without being continually told to do so by the instructor. This speeds up the class and gives the instructor more actual teaching time. You will probably see older students warming up in the hall before class. This is all part of a dancer's training.

Guest Teachers: are sometimes necessary when a teacher is ill or has another commitment that requires her time. Guest teachers are well qualified in their field and have much to offer the students. An occasional difference in class procedure will enhance the learning process and gives students a different perspective in the same subject.

Cross Training: is highly recommended and is required for intermediate and advanced classes. Taking various styles of dance develops expressiveness, creativity, versatility of movement and overall technical expertise and strength. Regardless of a dancer's goals, it is important that cross training begins as early as possible. *Often pre-teens and teens come into dance studios very scared to begin dance classes or try new styles of dance.* This only gets harder as one gets older! The fortitude that is nurtured and developed through taking multiple styles of dance also imparts confidence to many other aspects of life.

Recitals:

Watch the board for information about recitals and specific recital fee information! The participation fee of *approximately* \$35 is due in January and is refundable if the student decides by February 15 not to participate in the yearly recital. This fee helps to defray the rising cost of theatre rental, lighting design, props, backdrops, faculty representation, music, stage hands, lighting, program printing, etc. Performance and recitals are fun and an important aspect of dance training. Teachers and staff do their best to keep all fees as reasonable as possible while still providing a high quality and professional setting.

At the time you pay your recital fee a commitment sheet needs to be signed by a parent and turned in to the office. There may be extra rehearsals close to recital time, and everyone participating in the recital **must** attend the dress rehearsal. All extra rehearsals are included in your tuition and/or participation fee. Each class performs one piece choreographed by the instructor in one recital. A few classes will perform in two recitals. Our goal is to give students the opportunity to exhibit the skills they have been learning in as professional a setting and style as possible, to develop stage presence and learn appropriate back stage conduct from teachers who are themselves professionals.

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We reserve the right to expect any student who fails to come to class and rehearsal on a regular basis, and consequently do not adequately know the recital material at the prescribed time (in the teacher's professional judgment), to drop out of the performance. Unless an agreement between the student and instructor can be reached, we expect students to respect their teacher's judgment. This in no way releases the student from paying for the costume that has been made for the performance.

The Creative Movement, Studies In Movement and Beginning level ballet, tap & jazz classes will have an informal performance instead of a "full out" recital. The setting will still convey that it is indeed a performance, although on a smaller more intimate scale. The participation fee, costume fees and ticket sales are still in effect. There are a few variations on recital from year to year, so hopefully everyone can be flexible!

Costumes are billed by the studio (or in some cases, by the costumer) who will inform each class of the cost of their costume. Half of the costume cost is due before the costume is ordered, with the remainder due upon delivery. No costumes will be ordered without a *parent's signature* and one-half of the costume charge. Watch the bulletin board for information about costumes around March. Costumes for Creative Movement, Studies In Movement will be approximately \$40.00. Intermediate and Advanced (excluding Advanced Ballet) will be approximately \$55.00. Some classes will be able to rent costumes or accessories parts for approximately \$10.00 to \$20.00. Hopefully this information can help you budget for costumes costs!

Recital Tickets: are approximately \$10.00 each. Tickets go on sale the first Saturday in May. There are currently no complimentary tickets available for dancers or parents. All ticket revenue is applied to recital costs and facility rental. Recital is a not-for-profit endeavor. All funds go directly to the cost of your dancer's performance experience.

Awards:

Certificates are given at the end of the year to all students. Students who are with us for five years receive a 5-YEAR PIN, with a special gift for 10 YEARS. If a student drops out for a year and then returns, we may lose track of the count. **Please let the office know by April if you think you are eligible for this award, so that your name will be listed in the recital program.**

Stites Centre Parent Volunteers:

Beginning in 1996-97, the Stites Centre Parent Volunteers organized and carried out many projects that contribute to the overall well being of the dance program. We encourage you to volunteer with the multitude and variety of behind the scenes tasks necessary to make this be a great program for your dancer. Please stop by the office to let us know you are interested in joining this worthy group.

Dates To Remember:

- We are **open** on Martin Luther King, Jr.'s Birthday, George Washington's Birthday, Columbus Day and Veterans Day.
- We are **closed** on New Year's Day, Memorial Day, Independence Day, Labor Day, Thanksgiving Weekend (Thursday through Sunday), Christmas Day.
- **Fall Term Begins:** September, on the first Thursday after Labor Day
- **Thanksgiving Break:** Thursday through Sunday of Thanksgiving Week
- **Winter Break:** Generally, we close on the 1st Sunday prior to Christmas Day and re-open the 1st weekday after New Year's Day. Specific days will be posted.
- **Spring Break:** Same as Portland Public School District

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- **Recital Pictures:** Approximately 2nd and 3rd weekends of May (Saturday and Sunday) and 1st weekend of June
Exact dates to be announced ~ Look at the center board for exact dates!
(Note: Sorry, we *DO NOT* call 300 students when pictures are in, but we do have them available on a few days in July and August and during pre-registration.)
- **Recital Ticket Sale:** 1st Saturday in May
- **Recital:** Typically, 2nd full week of June and into the 3rd weekend of June.

The recital location is to be announced. There are several settings and dates depending on age and ability. Watch the bulletin board for information. Facilities involved will confirm in January.

Dress Codes:

CLASS	LEOTARD	TIGHTS/PANTS	SHOES
Creative Movement	Light or Powder Blue	Pink tights	Pink ballet or black gym shoes
Studies In Movement I & II	Royal Blue (If also enrolled in Pre-Ballet, you may wear Pink.)	Pink tights	Pink ballet or black gym shoes
Pre Ballet I & II	Pink (If also enrolled in Studies In Movement, you may wear Royal Blue.)	Pink tights	Pink ballet shoes
Character Jazz I, Tap I, Ballet I, Ballet II, Tap/Jazz, Hip Hop for 4th-6th grade	Purple	Tap, Jazz and Hip Hop dancers may wear black bike shorts, black jazz pants or pink or black tights.	Jazz and hip hop dancers need black jazz shoes or black gym shoes. Dance sneakers are allowed. Tap dancers need black tap shoes. You may either rent or purchase tap shoes from Stites.
Hip Hop for 6th grade & up, Ballet III, Ballet IV, Intermediate Tap, Theater Jazz, Tap III, Int./Adv. Ballet, Julane's Intermediate Jazz	Black	Tap, Jazz and Hip Hop dancers may wear black bike shorts, black biketard, black jazz pants or pink or black tights.	Jazz and hip hop dancers need black jazz shoes or black gym shoes. Dance sneakers are not allowed. Tap dancers need black tap shoes. You may either rent or purchase tap shoes from Stites.
Rhythmic Gymnastics, Baton & Leaps & Turns	Purple leotard. Or, wear the color you have for your tap, jazz or ballet class.	Black bike shorts, black biketard, black jazz pants or pink or black tights.	Any dance shoe. Baton twirlers will need white, light-weight, lace up tennis shoes (not platform style) for performances.
Saturday's Ballet IV/Int./Adv., Classical	Black or Wine (This is a trial for a couple of		

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Jazz III, Intermediate Tap II	months. At the end of a few months we will either expand the color choices or go back to black if it is abused!)		
Pilates and other adult classes	Preferably dance clothing as listed above! However, it is okay to wear clothing appropriate for movement and that you are comfortable in.		

Hair:

Hair should be secured in a bun, or braided and fastened up for ballet. A pony tail or braid and/or up for jazz and tap classes — at any rate away from the face, and **very tidy**. Appearance and proper attire have a lot to do with a student’s attitude and comfort in class, as well as giving the teacher the opportunity to observe dancers under the best circumstances.

*****Please note far in advance that no dancer can have hair in face (bangs, side hair down) or special hair clips, scrunchies, beads, etc. for recital! *This applies to group pictures as well!* (Do what you want for individual pictures!)

Jewelry:

Jewelry in classes can be very dangerous as well as distracting. Leave it at home! Also, note that in recitals and pictures it is absolutely not allowed!

Office Hours:

- Monday through Thursday:
4:00 p.m. - 8:00 p.m.
- Saturday:
9:00 am - Noon
- Closed most Fridays

We appreciate your patronage very much. The trust you place in us to work with and develop your child is not taken lightly. We try to ensure that your child has the benefit of highly trained, demanding yet nurturing teaching as she/he develops dance and life skills. Please know that we are trying our best to run a business and to provide quality, affordable dance and gymnastics instruction at the same time. We invite your input, ideas and suggestions at any time. *Remember: Keep watching for information on the center bulletin board!*

www.stitesdance.com