

WAYNE CENTER FOR THE ARTS

ESTABLISHED 1973

237 S Walnut St, Wooster, OH 44691

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Dance Department Handbook

2024-2025

WAYNE
CENTER
FOR THE ARTS

Wayne Center Dance Department Staff

Dance Artistic Director and Department Coordinator - *Brittany Eckstrom*

Instructors - *Brittany Eckstrom, Lauren Stenroos, Lydia Havener, Brianna Shearer, Raleigh Phillips, Ashley Schroer*

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A Guide for Parents and Students

Part of a dancer's training is learning and respecting classroom and performance guidelines, traditions and etiquette. This handbook will help guide students and parents towards gaining the most from their dance experience here with Wayne Center for the Arts Dance Department. This handbook will share some of our philosophies, practices, and policies.

Mission

Enriching lives and strengthening communities through art.

Values & Guiding Principles

Wayne Center for the Arts strives to be Relevant, Accessible and Affordable to all residents of Wayne County while providing services and programs that are of the highest quality.

Core Values

- Provide professional, courteous, helpful service in an inspiring environment that reflects a high standard of quality.
- Ensure accessibility to programming that is creative and innovative at its core for all Wayne County residents.
- Strive to meet community needs and continually assess the relevance of program offerings.
- Maintain a flexible and open approach to partnerships, space, and audiences.

Philosophy

Wayne Center for the Arts promotes artistic creativity, education, and presentation for a collaborative, inclusive and vibrant cultural community. We strive to inspire people to be creative and outside the lines of the standard in order to foster open-mindedness, inclusion, and new ways of looking at situations.

History of the Center

Located in Wooster, Ohio, Wayne Center for the arts was founded by a group of volunteers during the early 1970s. The Center was originally located in donated space at the College of Wooster. After its incorporation in 1973, the Center moved to the site of the former Walnut Street School in downtown Wooster which had been purchased and renovated for the Center by Rubbermaid, Incorporated. Wayne Center for the Arts is a 501(c)(3) tax-exempt organization with a governing board consisting of volunteer trustees.

The Curriculum for Both Schools of Dance

The comprehensive syllabus used by the Wayne Center for the Arts for the dance program is designed to develop technically strong, expressive dancers and adults who excel in life. The curriculum has been developed by past directors, instructors, and faculty and additions are made each year by the current coordinators and instructors.

I. Dance Department Overview

Wayne Center for the Arts dance programs is based upon the principle that exposure to a diverse array of arts helps our dancers become well-rounded artists and community members. Our vision is to inspire and prepare the next generation of dancers by exposing them to different styles and approaches. We offer two dance programs that provide stimulating, well-rounded educational experiences. Both The Community School of Dance and The Wayne Center Dance Company are designed to provide dance lessons for the diverse interests of our students.

Community School of Dance

The Community School of Dance is a recreational program designed for dancers of every age. Pre-Ballet Classes start at age 3 while Adult Dance classes keep us all dancing into the future. This program promotes exploratory dance lessons using movement for expression, wellness, learning academics, and fitness. It also provides dance lessons for those who are not old enough or cannot make the time commitment required of the Wayne Center Dance Company.

WCA Dance Company

Classical Ballet students are invited to join WCD during the second year of training (intermediate level). The commitment to join the Company is year-long and those who choose to join are guaranteed roles in the performances.

WCD dancers MUST attend 2 classes per week. The MONDAY COMPANY CLASSES ARE MANDATORY. WCD dancers are also required to attend all scheduled rehearsals (younger dancers generally rehearse on Saturdays and occasional Sundays, while company dancers may be asked to attend rehearsals Monday-Thursday in addition to Saturdays and occasional Sundays). All company dancers are required to take 3 weeks of the WCD Summer Program. We encourage students to attend dance intensives and workshops at nationally recognized professional dance programs, other studios and festivals. These may count towards the completion of WCD summer intensives but must have the WCA Dance Program Coordinator's permission ahead of time.

It is not mandatory that a student join Company. Students who cannot meet Company requirements may continue to take classes and can still dance as a member of the community school. Community school dancers are invited to perform only if additional roles are available in Company performances.

There is a company fee for those who join. The fee helps defray the costs associated with the performances- theater rental, lighting, costumes, printing, advertising and other administrative costs, to list a few. For community dancers involved in the Company performances, there may be an additional fee to cover the costs associated with the performance.

Competitions

Select WCA Dance Program students will have the opportunity to participate in competitions. Competitive performance provides an opportunity for dancers to work with a professional instructor one-on-one, build technique, and receive feedback and encouragement from leaders in the dance industry.

II. Procedures

Class Placement

Students are carefully evaluated and placed in the appropriate level by the instructors and class placement decisions are made in the best interest of the student. Generally, students remain at their assigned level for one full year. If a student shows exceptional progress, the instructor may invite him/her/them to a more advanced level. If a student is progressing at a slower rate, falls behind in class, has poor attendance, or does not meet the technique requirements at each level, she/he/they may be asked to remain at that level until additional progress is made. Regular evaluations will be provided so that students know areas where improvement is needed.

Attendance

Good attendance habits are essential for steady progress. Please make every effort to attend all classes and schedule rehearsals. If you know in advance that a class or rehearsal must be missed, we ask that you please provide a written note or email to the instructor and coordinators at least two weeks in advance of the planned absence so the instructor can plan accordingly. Students who are ill and/or contagious should remain at home. In case of last-minute illness, if possible please call or email Wayne Center for the Arts at (330)-264-2787.

Tardiness

Punctuality is a must. Please arrive early for class, allowing ample drive time plus extra time to get ready (shoes, hair, etc.) before class begins. Students who are late disrupt the class, as well as miss the important warm-up period at the beginning of class. If more than 10 minutes late, the student may be asked to sit and observe class. Chronic tardiness may jeopardize the students' future placement.

Make-up classes

If classes are canceled due to inclement weather, instructor illness, or other unforeseen circumstances, every effort will be made to schedule a make-up class for a future date, usually at the end of the semester. You will be notified in advance of all make-up class dates and times in email or writing.

Injury

If a student is injured during class, she/he/they should inform the instructor immediately. If a student comes to class with a previous injury and has pain and or limited mobility, please tell the instructor before class begins. For safety reasons, it may be better for the student to observe a class and take notes. In the event of a more serious injury, a doctor's note stating any and all limitations, course treatment and/or rest period should be given to the instructor. Observation will count towards attendance and it remains an educational experience when not physically dancing.

During rehearsal and/or performances, a dancer who is injured may be asked not to perform for safety reasons. WCA Dance Coordinators reserve the right to make this decision.

III. Student Expectations

Attitude

Personal corrections are necessary to develop correct ballet techniques and are given in the form of constructive criticism along with equal parts of encouragement. It means your teacher sees potential and wants to help you improve. It is important to make corrections with a positive attitude, try your best to make the change your teacher is looking for and remember to carry them with you to future classes. If you do not understand a correction that has been given, please ask your teacher for clarification.

Discipline

It is our ultimate aim to have each student respond to an inner-directed sense of right and wrong rather than be motivated by the fear of externally imposed consequences. The Wayne Center for the Arts expects all teachers, students and parents to model a culture of encouragement towards all people and will insist that the highest standard of behavior will be upheld.

If a dancer is struggling to understand the etiquette of dance class, first the parent will be invited to observe and then attend a conference with the Community School Coordinator and Dance Program Coordinator.

The dance studio is a place to work quietly and with concentration. When students enter the studio they must feel they are entering a special place where they can achieve anything they work for.

Team

It has been said that team stands for *Together Each Achieves More*. Wayne Center for the Arts and the Dance Program is committed to continually building a strong team which includes staff members, contractors, and volunteers, parents, students, and performers. Commitment to the team is an important ingredient of our success.

- No one is more responsible for your performance than you.
- To be a valuable team member you must possess strong skills and a trustworthy character.
- Use honest, direct, and caring communication.
- Focus on cooperation.
- Seek and expect active participation by all team members.
- Differences and disagreements are expected during the decision-making process, but 100% support of decisions is required once they are made.
- Know our mission, values, philosophy, and goals.
- Be an active listener. First seek to understand and then to be understood.

Bullying

CLEAn House is a set of principles, recommendations, and best practices distilled with input from theatre leaders throughout Northeast Ohio and across the nation. Wayne Center for the Arts is a CLEAn House Theatre/Facility. This means we are committed to being a space free of harassment based on sex, gender, race, religion, class, ethnicity, nationality, political belief, or ability. We are committed to being a safe environment that fully allows us to challenge ourselves, our audiences, and our communities; that supports creative risks of mind and body, and that establishes the freedom to create dance/theatre that represents the full range of human experience.

We define bullying as any behavior; physical, verbal, and/or written (handwritten or electronically), that detrimentally targets another dancer and/or instructor. This counts as bullying when it physically or emotionally harms a dancer/instructor, targets a dancer/instructor for any actual or perceived characteristic, or creates a hostile environment in the dance studio. If you see or are experiencing bullying please let the instructor and/or coordinators know immediately.

Actions/procedures:

Level One- Many concerns can be resolved through conversation with the parties involved. Whenever possible people should be encouraged to discuss challenges and concerns with one another. Sharing and hearing concerns with openness and respect can prevent situations from escalating further.

Level Two—The following participants have a level of authority and trust to determine whether a concern can be resolved at Level Two or if it needs to be sent to Level Three. All Level Two concerns should be documented in writing and reported to Level Three, even if no further actions are required. Level Two contacts might include the instructor(s), Dance Program Coordinator, Community School Coordinator and the parties involved in bullying (victim and bully).

Level Three—These participants should be considered at the final level of problem-solving, capable of resolving issues that have not been resolved prior to reaching this stage. They are strongly advised to consult with each other and review the legal or other implications of any decision. Level Three contacts might include the Executive Director, Dance Program Coordinator, Community School Coordinator and the parties involved (victim and bully).

Level Four – This course of action should be considered if the concerns are in direct connection with a Level Three executive such as the Coordinators, Instructor(s), and Executive Director, or if Level Three executives have not resolved a lower Level concern in a timely manner. Level Four contacts might include the Board of Trustees and all other parties involved.

Dress Code

All WCA Dance students are expected to strictly follow the dress code. Simple, neat attire prepares the student for the discipline and focus that is required to study dance styles. The instructor must be able to view the students' line and body placements without obstruction or distraction. If a student comes to class unprepared, she may be asked to sit and observe the class.

The dress code is designed to encourage unity and discipline among students and is part of the tradition of all forms of dance training. Simple, neat attire with the hair properly placed is expected for each class. Loose hair should be secured tightly to the heads and dance skirts and/or leg warmers are permitted at the instructor's discretion. The appropriate attire and hairstyle not only enable greater concentration in students, but it also assists the instructor in evaluating the dancer's needs allowing for more effective instruction.

We ask that dancers wear an appropriate cover-up over dancewear to and from the studio. Dance shoes should not be worn outdoors at any time-this destroys the shoe and tracks dirt and debris into the studio. Please put the dancer's name inside all dance shoes and attire.

Ballet (Ladies)

Hair: Ballet bun with a hair net or other appropriate styles, tightly pinned and secured to the head. No loose hair. No ponytails, no bangs, and hair should be done at home before coming to class or rehearsal.

Leotard: Solid black unless otherwise instructed; Camisole, tank, short or long sleeve styles are acceptable.

Tights: Theatrical pink tights -with or without seams - without holes or runs. Dancers on pointe should purchase convertible tights with open split soles for ease in changing to/from pointe shoes.

Ballet Technique shoes: should be pink and fitted properly with elastics sewn on and should not have holes. Leather technique shoes last longer than canvas - either one is acceptable

Pointe shoes: All pointe shoes (style and fit) must be approved by the instructor. Break them in before coming to class or rehearsal. Ribbons and elastics should be neatly and securely sewn.

Ballet (Gentlemen)

Gentlemen: White t-shirt or leotard, black tights, white socks and black or white slippers

All other Classes

Hair: Neatly up in a pony tail, bun, etc. so long as hair is out of face. (*Hip hop is the only exception where hair can be down.*)

Clothing:

LADIES: A solid colored leotard or tight fitting dance top, tights or tight-fitting dance pants/dance shorts

GENTLEMEN: T-shirt, tank or athletic top; Shorts, jazz pants, or sweatpants

Shoes:

JAZZ: Black or tan jazz slip-on

TAP: Tan or black low-heeled tap shoes (*ladies*), black low-heeled tap shoes (*gentlemen*)

HIP HOP: Any clean sneakers (it is ideal if you have one pair of sneakers reserved as your “dance only” sneakers)

Company Dancer Pointe-Shoe Guide

Pointe work (dancing on the tips of the toes) is a much-anticipated extension of a dancer's training. There is a significant level of commitment and dedication required before a student is considered for pointe work. The Wayne Center Dance Coordinators and instructors take a conservative approach in determining readiness for pointe work with the long-term safety and welfare of the student in mind. It is never too late to begin pointe work, but starting too early can cause problems later in life. Generally, students will take pre-pointe for about a year where the focus is on technique, alignment, and strength training necessary to support the weight of the body and move properly in pointe shoes. This may vary with each student, but the typical age is usually 11 ½ - 12 years old.

There are many factors that determine readiness for pointe work including attendance, consistent use of proper technique, overall strength, physical development and emotional maturity. The readiness for pointe work is determined solely by the Dance Program Coordinators. Additionally, WCA reserves the right to remove a student from pointe classes due to excessive absence, physical limitations or lack of motivation.

When students are ready for pointe shoes, the WCA Dance Coordinators will give instructions as to where to purchase shoes which must be carefully fitted by a professional. We recommend The Stage Center in Akron or Footsteps in North Olmsted, whose staff is experienced and knowledgeable in fitting pointe shoes properly. If you are planning to be fitted for pointe shoes with instructor approval please notify the retailer prior to your visit. They will make sure there is adequate staff on hand to assist you. Please allow for plenty of time for the fitting and take dance tights with you and make sure your toenails are trimmed. Once shoes are fitted and purchased, do not wear or attempt to sew them. The student will then be taught how they should be sewn and tied during class (we recommend parents and dancers both be present).

Please note that once a student has begun pointe, it is not guaranteed she will perform in pointe shoes right away. It takes time to build the additional strength and stamina needed to move safely and with ease while en pointe. The decision regarding when a student is ready to perform en pointe is made by her/their instructor alone.

Personal Hygiene

We work in a close environment, therefore all dance clothing should be laundered after each class to avoid odor. Ballet slippers and pointe shoes should be allowed to dry thoroughly outside of dance bags - this also helps them last longer. Mesh bags are great for airing and travel.

It is also important to take care of yourself. Foot care is especially important for a dancer. Take extra care *at home* to keep toenails clipped to prevent in-grown nails and infections while dancing on pointe. The use of deodorant is also strongly encouraged.

During performances please remove nail polish. Dancers are welcome to have clear gloss over the nail but no other colors are allowed.

IV. Parent Expectations

Teaching Method

Proper ballet training happens only when the student feels the correct body position and in most cases that requires the teacher to place the body into position. The physical movement of limbs is important to the training of muscle memory. This can cause muscular discomfort. It is not unusual for a dancer to develop sore muscles just as participants in any sport or physical activity might. Parents are encouraged to speak to the teacher regarding any special concerns.

Communication

While teachers and Coordinators are always happy to discuss and answer questions about a dancer's progress, they are not available in the hallways, between classes, or outside of work hours for discussion. A simple question may be asked between classes, however if more time is needed please contact the Dance Program Coordinator and Community School Coordinator with questions or concerns.

It is always better for the teachers to be informed about a problem directly before it becomes overwhelming to young dancers and/or their families.

Class times are very close together, please leave your name and phone number with the receptionist, hand it to the teacher or email the Dance Coordinators and we will be in touch with you as soon as possible.

If there is an issue please do not disrupt class time to discuss it with the instructor. We ask that you take a moment, breath, and leave a note or email the Dance Program Coordinator and we will get back to you as soon as possible.

If your dancer has any physical or emotional problems, we'd like to give our special attention to the student. Please let us know as quickly as possible.

If you notice a drastic change in the students' reaction to class, either positive or negative, please advise the teacher. The more information we have the better it is for everyone.

Volunteering

There are several areas for parents to aid in the development of Wayne Center's Dance Program. The ongoing fund-raisers and publicity appearances contribute directly to the financial aid of the Community School of Dance and the Pre-Professional School of Dance. Volunteers are always needed at these events.

Fundraising events are an opportunity for parents to participate in aiding the financial aid program and supplement the costs of running a large program.

Families are expected to actively volunteer for the success of the Wayne Center Dance Program. Below is a list of areas of service:

Administration- coordinating appearances and special events

Communications- hanging signage for performances, social media, and spreading the word

Development- creating partnerships with other organizations, asking for alumni and patron sponsorships, fundraising events

Operations- managing the boutique, ushering, costuming

Production- moving sets, scenery, props, flooring, set up and tear down

Purchasing Equipment

Note: if you are planning to be fitted for pointe shoes with instructors' approval please notify the retailer prior to your visit. They will make sure there is adequate staff on hand to assist you. Please also allow plenty of time for the fitting, take dance tights with you and make sure your nails are trimmed

Stage Center

908 N. Main St.

Akron, OH 44310

800-535-7810

(Discount available to dancers)

Footsteps Dancewear

24048 Lorain Rd.

North Olmsted, OH 44070

440-779-0500

[Www.footstepsinc.com](http://www.footstepsinc.com)

The Dance-Wear House

5390 Fulton Dr. NW

Canton, OH 44718

330-497-9419

[Www.thedancewearhousecanton.com](http://www.thedancewearhousecanton.com)

Online:

Discount Dance

[Www.discountdance.com](http://www.discountdance.com)

Dancewear Solutions

[Www.Dancewear solutions.com](http://www.Dancewear solutions.com)