



PARENT HANDBOOK

August 2016



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INTRO

Welcome to the Claire School of Dance! We are so glad you are here. Our staff is a group of dedicated, experienced, and creative teachers and administrators. To ensure a common pool of knowledge, we have put together this parent handbook. If you find any errors or omissions, please let us know. We want to make sure everyone has easy access to the information they need as part of the Claire School of Dance family. Our policies, schedules, and programs do change from time to time. Our website is the place to check for up to date information.

LOCATIONS

The Claire School of Dance has two locations, 1245 Heights Blvd (inside Grace United Methodist Church) and 1703 Heights Blvd (inside Heights Christian Church). The Heights Christian location, also known as Lambert Hall, includes a dance studio and our main dance school office. Our Grace United location has three (3) studios. Studio A is the largest and is located at the far end of the waiting room on the third floor. Studio B, half the size of Studio A, is located at the near end of the waiting room on the third floor. Studio C, slightly larger than Studio B, is located at the far end of the hallway on the second floor.

All studios have sprung floors, ensuring a soft landing for the bodies of our students. Lambert Hall and Grace United's Studio A have mirrors and ballet barres. Studios B and C at Grace United do not. Studio C is home to our Progressing Ballet Technique and Pilates classes. It is equipped with yoga mats, Therabands, and exercise balls. All studios are equipped with educational aids such as scarves, ribbons, and rhythm sticks. Students are not allowed to play or touch exercise equipment or educational aids unless specifically directed by the teacher.

Also on the third floor, at the top of the stairs, is the Art Upstairs room, also known as the craft and snack room or the birthday party room.

REGISTRATION

Registration for Claire School of Dance classes is online. Simply click on "register" at the top of our website and then, if you are new to us, on "new customer." If you are a returning parent, you already have an account in our data base. In that case, please click on "already a customer" and use your email address to log in. Please do not create a duplicate account. If you forget your password, you can create a new one.

Registration for fall classes opens in April. Registration for academic year classes remains open until January 31. We do not accept new students after this date, unless we open a new class for the spring semester.

*Welcome to the Claire
School of Dance, serving
the Heights since 1996.*



*Registration for
summer camps and
classes opens
February 1st.*

When a parent registers for the first time, s/he will need to include payment information. This can be either a bank account or a credit card. Parents will also need to choose “one payment” or “installments” under Payment Type.

You will receive an automatic email to confirm receipt of your registration. Payments are processed manually to ensure proper credit for any discounts. You can generally expect confirmation of your payment within 24 hours (48 over the weekend).

PLACEMENT

Generally speaking, placement for younger children is according to age. Creative movement 1 is for 2 1/2 though the age of 3 years and 5 months; creative movement 2 is for 3 1/2 year olds up to age 4, and creative movement 3 is for preK children (4 year olds). Preballet is for the Kinder student (5 year olds) while Primary A and B is for first and second graders, respectively.

Placement for Level (ballet) classes is determined by level of previous training. Level 1A is for beginning ballet students ages 8 and up. Placement in our Level program is at the discretion of the school director. At CSD, safety and the development of proper technique are our primary concerns in determining placement. Parents should contact the school regarding an audition to determine placement in classes above Level 1A.

PAYING FOR CLASSES

All regularly enrolled students should have payment information on file. We offer a discount for payment in full as well as a convenient monthly installment plan. The amount of installments has been calculated to include vacations and holidays. There are no rebates for weeks when there are no classes.

As a general rule, parents paying by installment will pay the registration fee and first installment upon registration. Regular auto debit payments begin October 3rd of any given year and run through April of the following year. There are no regular payments in May.

Summer classes and camps are paid for in full upon registration.

Adults taking drop in classes are welcome to pay using cash, check, or credit card.

REFUNDS AND WITHDRAWALS

Academic year programs:

For students who withdraw prior to the start of classes: There will be a \$35 processing fee.

For academic year withdrawals once classes have started:

In cases of serious illness or similar circumstances, or where the School deems it in the best interest of the child to withdraw from class, all unused tuition will be promptly refunded, minus any credit card fee.

For other withdrawals once classes have started, we require one month's notice. Except for serious illness or similar circumstances, no withdrawals are allowed after November 15. Parents will continue to be responsible for tuition regardless of whether student attends class.

For students who withdraw after the start of classes there is a processing fee equivalent to one month's tuition.

In all cases, registration fees are NON-REFUNDABLE.

For summer classes or camps:

When the School deems it in the best interest of the child to withdraw from class, all unused tuition will be refunded, minus any credit card fee. In cases of serious illness or similar circumstances, tuition may be refunded if credit toward future classes is impractical. In general, there are NO REFUNDS for summer programs.

In all cases, withdrawal must be IN WRITING via email.

HOW WE KEEP YOU UP TO DATE

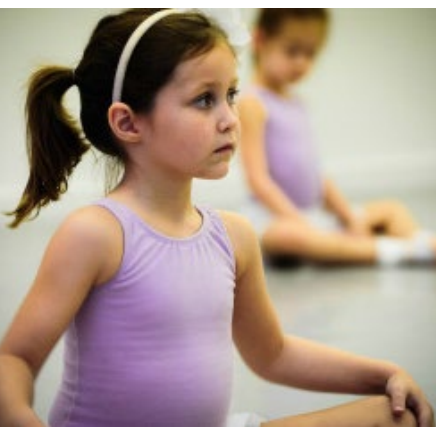
In order to keep parents informed, we post and disseminate a monthly newsletter. Our newsletter is posted on the bulletins boards of all three waiting rooms as well as the door of our office. We also send the same information in an email to all parents. Parents should be sure to read all notices posted in our waiting rooms and all emails.

In cases where there is a last minute cancellation of classes — bad weather, teacher illness, etc. — we will send a text to all affected parents.

ATTIRE

Creative movement students wear a leotard (boys wear stretch shorts and a t shirt). Hair should be pulled back off the face. Tights and shoes are not required. We prefer bare feet.





Preballet students wear a lavender tank leotard and a white skirt (preferably Mirella, which is wider than a wrap skirt). Pink leather ballet slippers. No tights. Hair must be pulled back off the face. Buns are preferred.

Primary students wear a mulberry tank leotard and a white skirt (preferably Mirella), pink leather ballet slippers. No tights. Hair must be pulled back off the face. Buns are preferred.

Level 1 students wear a pale blue cami leotard and a white skirt, pink leather ballet slippers. Tights are optional. (Boys wear black stretch shorts, white t shirt, and black or white ballet slippers.)

Level 2 students wear a seafoam green cami leotard and white skirt, pink leather ballet slippers. Tights are optional. Hair must be worn in a bun.

Level 3 students wear a navy cami leotard and a white skirt, pink leather ballet slippers, pink tights. Hair must be worn in a bun. When appropriate, pointe shoes.

Level 4 students wear a garnet cami leotard and a white skirt, pink leather ballet slippers, pink tights. Hair must be worn in a bun. Pointe shoes.

Level 5 students wear a hunter green cami leotard and a white skirt, pink leather ballet slippers, pink tights. Hair must be worn in a bun. Pointe shoes.

Level 6 students wear a black cami leotard and a white skirt, pink leather ballet slippers, pink tights. Hair must be worn in a bun. Pointe shoes.

Jazz and tap students: leotard or top and stretch pants or leggings. Jazz or tap shoes. Hair must be pulled back off the face. Students going from a ballet class to tap are welcome to wear their ballet uniform. No jewelry.

A NOTE ABOUT HAIR: As students begin learning to turn, it becomes very important to have hair in a bun rather than a pony tail. In order to turn, students need to “spot.” This involves the sharp snap of the head. Loose hair or a pony tail will get into a student’s eyes, affecting balance. Parents can help their children develop personal responsibility by ensuring that ballet slippers and hair supplies are kept in a dance bag, ready for class.

ARRIVAL FOR CLASS

Teachers will arrive at least 15 minutes before their first class to open the building for parents and students. Unless students are late and class has

already started, students do not enter the studio until invited in. Parents and students wait in the waiting rooms. The teacher will come get the students to take them into the studio for class. Unless the student has separation issues, parents do not accompany students into the studio, but wait in the waiting room. A TV monitor is available for each studio so parents may watch the class in progress.

We encourage students ***to visit the restroom before class*** since bathroom visits in the middle of class are disruptive.

Arriving Late. Late arrivals are disruptive and young students may feel so uncomfortable arriving late that they refuse to enter the classroom. However, traffic in Houston is notorious. If a student arrives late for a class, the parent should watch on the monitor for a break in class activities. *Students should not interrupt the class.* Instead, they should enter the classroom between activities.

AFTER CLASS

Students are not allowed to enter the studios without teacher permission or to be in the studio unaccompanied by the teacher. If the teacher and parent engage in conversation after class and the child begins to run in the studio, the teacher and parent should move the conversation to the waiting room. Students must not come to consider the studio a playground.

If children have been playing with toys in the waiting room, parents are asked to help their child put away the toys before leaving the school.

PARENT OBSERVATION

CSD has monitors for all studios. Parents are able to watch classroom activities on these monitors. As a general rule, parents do not observe class from inside the classroom.

Exception 1: if a Creative Movement student has separation issues, we invite the parent into the classroom to sit next to the door. The student is invited to sit in the circle but sitting with their parent is acceptable as well. Every effort is made to include a child sitting with their parent in classroom activities. It is CSD policy to allow students the time they need to become comfortable with the environment. This generally is in one or two classes but may take longer.

Exception 2: If a child does not speak English or speak it well enough to be comfortable, the parent may be allowed to sit in the classroom by the door.





BIRTHDAY PARTIES

CSD offers students and outside individuals the opportunity to celebrate birthdays in our Art Upstairs room. Birthday parties are two hours long and are held on Saturday afternoons. They include a craft activity and dance class, as well as use of our party room for cake and beverages. A teacher remains on the premises during the party for the parents' convenience.

Upon receipt of a birthday party request, we contact teachers regarding availability. Once we have a confirmed teacher, we book the party and payment for the party becomes due.

Parents may have access to the party room 30-45 minutes prior to the party for set-up and decoration.

ADULT CLASSES

Claire School of Dance offers Pilates and ballet classes for adults. Tap classes are also available through Tap Happy. Adults interested in tap should contact Tap Happy directly.

Pilates and ballet classes for adults are on a drop-in basis. Classes may be paid for at each class or students may purchase a class card. Class cards are \$150 for 10 classes and \$85 for 5 classes. Class cards are good for four months. Drop in rates for a Pilates class is \$15. Drop in for a ballet class (90 minutes) is \$20.



CAMPS

The Claire School of Dance offers both winter and summer camps. Summer camps include both dance and non-dance programs. Winter camps are generally non-dance. Our programs are educational, child-centered, and fun! Our lesson plans are original to the Claire School of Dance. For safety and educational reasons, we maintain a 1-6 or 1-8 adult-to-child ratio for our programs.

We provide all art, craft, and snack supplies. Teachers arrive a minimum of 15 minutes early to open the building for parents. Upon request, we can offer early drop off at 8:30 or 8 a.m. and late pick up of 3 p.m. There is a fee for this service. Children should not be dropped off prior to 8:45 without a reservation. Late pick ups who have not reserved the late pick up service or who exceed the 3 p.m. pick up time may be charged a fee.

All camps take place at our Grace United location. The first day of camp parents should make sure the teacher has the appropriate emergency contact information on the check in sheet. Parents should check the child in and out each day.

We provide a daily snack that respects the dietary requirements of our campers. Children are welcome to bring their own snack, if they prefer. Day-long campers will need to bring their own lunch.

Attire is generally any comfortable clothing. Leotards, dance skirts, and costumes are permitted.

Registration for camps is online and opens for summer camps on January 31. Registration for Winter camps opens November 15. Parents should log into their account to register or call the office for assistance.

NUTCRACKER

The Claire School of Dance produces an annual *New York Nutcracker*. All students in classes preballet and older are eligible to participate. Permissions slips are handed out in early October. Parents MUST inform the School by mid-October if their child does not wish to participate. Late withdrawal may trigger an assessment of the Nutcracker fee.

There is a fee of approximately \$125 to help cover the cost of theatre rental, costumes, and other expenses. No student is denied the opportunity to perform due to lack of funds. Parents wishing to apply for a Nutcracker scholarship should contact the office.

Most Nutcracker rehearsals take place during class. Rehearsals occupy approximately 10-15 minutes of class time initially. This may need to increase closer to the show.

Nutcracker t-shirts. Every year CSD designs and produces a special New York Nutcracker t-shirt with the names of cast members on the back. Order forms for the Nutcracker t-shirt are posted in mid-October. The t-shirts are distributed Nutcracker weekend, either at the Saturday morning ticket sales and t-shirt pick up or at the run-through rehearsal.

*Our New York
Nutcracker takes
the music from
Tchaikovsky's holiday
classic . . .*



... adds a dash of the swingin' Duke Ellington, and mixes in the sass (and color scheme!) of Eloise at Christmastime.



Tickets. Every child participating in the Nutcracker gets two free tickets as part of their Nutcracker fee. Additional tickets may be purchased from the School. Ticket order forms are posted in the waiting rooms in early November. Free and purchased tickets may be picked up the Saturday morning of the Nutcracker weekend or at the box office beginning one hour prior to the performance.

Photographs: CSD hires two professional photographers, one for individual and class photos backstage and another to take photos of the dress rehearsal. Links to these photos are emailed to all parents with children in the Nutcracker. Parents order Nutcracker photos directly from the Nutcracker photographers.

DVDs. The performance of the Nutcracker is videotaped by a two-camera set up and edited for both close ups and wide angle. Order forms for Nutcracker DVDs are posted in mid-November. Parents may also place orders a) at ticket pick-up Saturday morning of the Nutcracker weekend, b) at the box office the day of the performance, or c) via email up to 2 days after the performance. All sales are prepaid. Nutcracker DVDs are mailed to parents approximately 10 days after the performance. The cost of postage and handling is included in the DVD price.

Bouquets. It is traditional to offer flowers to performers after a ballet. CSD offers a very special bouquet with rose and ornament. Order sheets are placed in all waiting rooms three weeks before the performance. Orders for bouquets may be placed up to noon the day before the performance. Bouquets are picked up at the box office of the theatre starting one hour before the performance.

Room Mamas. Two to three weeks before the performance, CSD will post a request for room mamas. Room mamas help backstage, getting children into and out of costume, supervising bathroom and lunch breaks, escorting children to the stage and back to the dressing room, and generally maintaining backstage decorum.

Room mamas will be expected to be available for both the Saturday afternoon run-through and all day Sunday (dress rehearsal and performance). This continuity is important to a smooth running show.

Performance Weekend. The Nutcracker occupies a weekend, generally the second one, in December. The Saturday morning is reserved for spot rehearsals for the very young or those dances which combine classes or a class and a soloist. Saturday afternoon is the finale and run-through rehearsal. Approximately half the cast has its group and individual photos on Saturday.

All day Sunday is devoted to the Nutcracker - from 9:30 a.m. to 4 p.m., approximately. The dress rehearsal starts at 11 a.m. approximately. Generally, a photographer takes performance photos at the dress rehearsal. All dancers should be in full costume for the dress rehearsal.

Dancers change into street clothes to eat lunch. At 1:30 approximately, dancers change back into costumes. The show starts at 2:05 p.m. and generally runs between an hour and an hour and 15 minutes.

When dancers are finished with the show (all dancers bow in the finale!!), they change into street clothes and turn in a COMPLETE costume, including accessories, to the room mama. Room mamas are responsible for seeing that all costumes turned in are complete and properly arranged on either hanger or in a box.

Once a complete costume has been turned in, dancers are free to go to the stage door to receive their performance gift and find their parents.

PICTURE DAY

Every spring CSD offers the opportunity for class and individual photo portraits. Picture Day is announced in the newsletter and class schedules are posted in all waiting rooms as well as on our website. Each class has a scheduled time so that students may a class photo. Individual photos are taken either before or after the class photo. For this reason, parents are asked to bring their child 15 minutes before their scheduled class photo.

Attire for class photos is whatever attire is allowed or required for class. Students in creative movement may wear any pastel or black leotard they would wear to class. Tutus and dance skirts are also permitted. Students in preballet and up should wear their class uniform. Children in creative movement, preballet, and primary have the option to wear a flower fairy crown for their photo.

Students unable to make their scheduled class photo, may come any time between the first and last scheduled class photo. Students who come at an unscheduled time will be photographed in between scheduled classes. This may involve a wait of 15 minutes or more. As a general rule, it is easier to be squeezed in between 12:30 p.m. and the end of the photo session.

After the photo session, parents will receive a link to review and order photos. Photos are sent directly to the parents' address. Any missing orders or questions regarding photo should be addressed to the photographer.



The end of the year recital is an opportunity for the parents to see what their children have learned



RECITAL

The Claire School of Dance presents an end-of-year Parent Demonstration for all students and classes. Students in creative movement classes have ***in-class demonstrations*** where parents are invited to sit in during the last class of the school year. Students in creative movement classes receive fairy crowns and roses at their Parent Day class.

Students in preballet (kinder students) and higher classes participate in the Parent Demonstration in a theatre or auditorium. We alternate between Saturday and Sunday recitals. The recital in 2017 will be on a Saturday, the recital in 2018 will be on a Sunday.

There is a run-through rehearsal at 1 p.m. at the theatre. The Demonstration itself begins at 3 p.m. As with the *Nutcracker*, we ask for room mamas to help the children with the rehearsal, bathroom break, snack, and performance.

Students in the theatre-based Parent Day Demonstration wear their class uniform for both the run-through rehearsal and the performance. Students should come to the theatre with their hair already up. There is no time for changing clothes or putting hair up.

No food or water are allowed in the theatre. Students should NOT bring any snack or beverage, including water, with them. We will provide water and a snack between rehearsal and performance. Those with special dietary needs – in particular, gluten allergies – should let the office know.

Students and their room mamas will sit in the first rows of the theatre. Each class will mount the stage via stairs stage left and leave the stage via stairs stage right. There will be a teacher or staff member stage right to help students down the stairs and present students with a rose. Students in Tap, Jazz and Level ballet classes also receive a necklace in addition to the rose. Preballet and Primary classes receive fairy crowns to wear during the performance.

Teachers and room mamas sit with their students to keep classes quiet during rehearsal and performance and to assist with the bathroom/water break between rehearsal and performance. Students are free to leave when the performance is over.

We do video tape the recital. Copies of the DVD may be ordered starting two weeks before the end of the school year OR at the run-through rehearsal OR up to 2 days after the recital. Recital DVDs will be mailed to parents' homes.