

RECITAL AND COSTUME HANDBOOK

Philosophy, Policies, and Procedures

Dear Parents and Students,

FOR THE PAST TWELVE years, Mansfield Academy of Dance has provided students with an exciting performance experience through its June recital. The recital—that annual staple of the dance school—conjures images of childhood for many. It’s a rite of passage for thousands of youngsters, a chance to shine in front of family and friends that they anticipate with nervous excitement.

The recital offers our students a professionally directed performance that allows them to present to their families and friends the results of a year’s hard work, dedication, and progress.

A big part of dance training is learning through performance. Although performance opportunities can help prepare some students for a possible career in dance, they also contribute to children’s success in non-dance activities. The performing experience helps build self-esteem and self-confidence and can result in better in-school presentations, improved social skills, and strong interview skills for future college or job opportunities.

The rehearsal process is a tremendous learning experience as well. It helps the children develop retention skills, and by working with their classmates on a group performance, they learn the positive aspects of working as a team to create the best end result.

Dedication to recital commitments is the responsibility of both students and their parents. We’ve created this handbook in an effort to clarify what we expect from you in terms of commitments and responsibility to the annual recital, the school, and other students and parents.

Key contact information for the Mansfield Academy of Dance:

12 Merrow Rd Storrs-Mansfield, CT 06268
860-393-2623
themansfielddance@gmail.com

STAYING INFORMED

We work hard to make the dance experience organized and fun. Keeping you informed is one of our primary goals. Please read all newsletters and other school information.

In an effort to conserve paper, newsletters and important updates are printed and left at the front desk for those who do not regularly use e-mail. The same newsletters and updates are emailed to you and posted on the Mansfield Academy of Dance website and Facebook page.

If you have any questions regarding the information distributed, we encourage you to contact the office at 860-393-2623. We answer email on a daily basis, except on weekends. Feel free to email questions to the office at themansfielddance@gmail.com.

Website www.mansfielddance.com

News, important parent and student information, contact information, and more are available online 24 hours a day.

Facebook Page www.facebook.com/mansfielddance

“Like” the Mansfield Academy of Dance page on Facebook to receive daily updates on school events. You can select to receive notifications of new posts. Please invite your family and friends to “like” the school. Please do not post questions on the school’s Facebook page. Instead, please email them directly to themansfielddance@gmail.com

PART I: The Commitment

Important Recital Dates

By allowing your child to participate in the Mansfield Academy of Dance recital, you commit yourself and/or your child to the following dates and events.

Date	Activity	Where
May 17th	Recital tickets go on sale	At the Studio
May 30th	Recital Participation Forms Due	At the Studio
June 7 th	Picture Day	At the Studio
June 10 th	In-Studio Rehearsal	At the Studio
June 11 th	Dress Rehearsal	Patriot's Park
June 12 th	Recital Rain Date	Patriot's Park
June 13 th	Recital	Patriot's Park

Updates

As the season progresses, additional recital information or updates will be posted on the studio website, www.mansfielddance.com, in monthly newsletters, and on the school facebook page. Make it your responsibility to keep abreast of this important information. Our goal is to make the recital an organized, exciting experience for everyone involved. It's a team effort: students, their parents, the teachers, and the director are key players in the show's success.

Home Study

To ensure that the students feel confident about their performance, we ask parents and guardians to encourage them to rehearse their recital choreography on a regular basis. A link to a drop box folder with recital music will be available through facebook, email and our website recital page.

➤ **Our goal is to make the recital an organized, exciting experience for everyone involved.**

PART 2: Costumes

We spend many hours selecting the costumes for each class. They are always age-appropriate and of the highest quality possible. Costumes include all accessories (hats, gloves, etc.), but not shoes or tights.

NOTE: No jewelry or underwear is to be worn with costumes. The tights take care of the underwear job. This includes during dress rehearsals and performances and when class pictures are taken.

No refunds will be made if a parent or guardian withdraws a child from the school prior to the recital.

Sizing

All children will be measured in order to determine their proper costume size(s).

Alterations

Although rare, alterations are sometimes needed after the costumes have been distributed and are the sole responsibility of the student's parent or guardian. We will do our best to take a list of volunteers from our dance families who are willing to help with alterations. Please contact the Mansfield Academy of Dance office for recommended tailors.

Distribution

Costumes will be sent home in the week leading up to picture day (unless alterations of some kind are needed). Costumes will only be distributed when all outstanding balances for the season (including tuition) are paid in full. The deadline for all balances is due the first week of May.

Please try on all costumes and accessories (except for tights) as soon as you bring them home. This allows you to account for all accessories and determine whether alterations are needed. Doing this well in advance of the recital

minimizes stress at performance time. If you believe that you were given the wrong size tights, please DO NOT try them on. Instead, bring them into the studio and we will have a “try-on” pair. Parents are responsible for all tights that are opened and/or ruined prior to the recital.

Costume care

Costumes should be hung as soon as they come home. We recommend that you label all costumes, shoes, accessories, and tights with your child’s name. Place the costumes in a garment bag with your child’s name on the outside. Pack accessories in a clear plastic bag (labeled with your child’s name). Hats should be stored in a hatbox or similar container to prevent damage. Press all costumes with a cool iron or steamer prior to the dress rehearsal and the performance. Please do not wash costumes in your washing machine; dry clean them only (after the recital).

Remove any tags that could hang out of the costume.

If costume straps do not have snaps or are not attached, please sew them prior to picture day. Never cross the straps unless specified by the teacher.

Many costumes come with headpieces or hats. We will determine how the headpieces will be worn at picture day. In general, hairpieces are worn to the dancer’s right side.

NOTE: To ensure that there are no costume problems, students should not wear their costumes, accessories, or tights prior to the photo session, dress rehearsal, or performance.

Costumes with fringe

You will notice a string at the bottom of most fringe skirts or trim, which is to keep the fringe from getting tangled before pictures or performance. Please do not pull the string until picture day. After that date, please place fringe skirts on a hanger to keep them from getting tangled.

Ironing

We do not recommend using a traditional iron when pressing costumes. Silks can burn, sequins can melt, and fabric colors may change. Please use only a steam iron. Iron costumes with caution because of glues that may have been used to attach appliqués and/or trim.

Tutu maintenance

Grasp the waist and give it a gentle shake, then use your fingers to “comb” out any pieces of tulle that are wrinkled. To store a tutu, put it on a hanger upside down. To help remove persistent wrinkles, hang the tutu in the bathroom during a hot shower or use a handheld steamer.

➤ **We recommend that you label all costumes, shoes, accessories, and tights with your child’s name.**

Costume racks

A wheeled clothing rack is a smart investment if your child has several costumes. It keeps the costumes organized, prevents wrinkles, and provides some privacy during costume changes. Hang costumes on the rack in the order they will be needed during the show. Another option is a bag equipped with garment rack such as a Dream Duffel or Rack’n’Roll

TIPS: COSTUME COMMON SENSE

- ✓ Always have a second pair of tights available.
- ✓ Place costumes in a garment bag for travel.
- ✓ Carry hats in a hatbox or container to prevent them from damage.
- ✓ Hang and press costumes before each performance.
- ✓ Place your name in all costumes and shoes.

Quick costume changes

During the recital, some students may have quick costume changes. A special team of moms or teachers will assist these students, whose costumes and accessories will be placed in the backstage area.

Costume cover-ups

Students should wear a cover-up when in costume but not performing. A bathrobe or sweats work best. The cover-up helps keep the muscles warm and prevents costumes from becoming soiled.

PART 3: Tights, Shoes, Hair, and Makeup

Tights

To ensure that there are no discrepancies in color and style, students are required to have specific tights for their classes. The color, brand and style will be listed on the costume info sheet that will be brought home with the costume. Tights are available at the studio or from dancewear stores. Be sure to purchase the correct style. Please purchase new tights for the recital, and do not wear or wash them before the dress rehearsal or performance. (Note: Having a second pair of tights on hand offers students and parents a great sense of security.) The majority of our dancers wear Theatricals or Balera brand lt. tan.

Shoes

To maintain uniformity, Dancers should have the style and color shoes corresponding to their class's dress code. All girls' tap shoes must have elastic (remove all ties) or buckles depending on the required style. Some costumes will come with ties for the shoes. Be sure that all shoes are cleaned prior to the recital. Please consult the studio dress code in your handbook or ask your child's teacher about which shoes are required for their class. We will likely be able to let them borrow the correct color if needed for the performance. If you purchase dance shoes just before the recital, please break them in (indoors) so that they are pliable and comfortable for the recital.

Discounted shoes and dancewear

Mansfield Academy of Dance also offers dancewear and shoes for individual purchase at any time during the school year.

Hair and makeup

Dancers may desire to wear some make up to highlight facial features. For the boys, a little blush works well. This helps us see the dancer's face on stage as the bright lights tend to make faces washed out and ghostly.

Uniform hairstyles are required. **All female students must wear their hair in a bun, poof, sleek braided style or one or two French braids with the ends tucked under. No bangs or beads are allowed.** Flyaways should be slicked back with gel and/or hairspray. Dancers with short hair must pull their hair away from the face and slick it down.

➤ **Having a second pair of tights on hand offers students and parents a great sense of security.**

PART 4: Be Prepared

Planning

The recital isn't a one-day activity. Gather all costumes, accessories, shoes, and makeup several days in advance so you'll know if something is missing or isn't right. Make a checklist of your child's routines, listing the costume, tights, shoes, and any accessories, and refer to it to make sure you have all your supplies before going to the theater. Bring at least one extra pair of tights of each color. Also bring extra hair gel, hairnets, bobby pins, safety pins and hairspray.

TIPS: OTHER HANDY EXTRAS

- ✓ Baby wipes/Shout wipes (to fix makeup mistakes or wash hands)
- ✓ Baby powder (for itchy costumes)
- ✓ Safety pins (for emergency costume repairs)
- ✓ Clear nail polish (to repair minor holes or runs in tights when there isn't time to change them)
- ✓ Your pain reliever of choice
- ✓ Band-Aids (the "invisible" kind)

Snacks

Please do not send your child to the dress rehearsal or recital with snacks or beverages that could stain their costumes. Crackers, energy bars, apples, carrot sticks, and string cheese are good choices. Water is the best beverage; please do not send juice boxes or other sticky beverages. And never give them chocolate bars!

Please note that our picture day, dress rehearsal and recital events are all NUT FREE!

PART 5: Dress Rehearsal

Participation in the dress rehearsal is *mandatory*. The dress rehearsal allows the students to become familiar with the auditorium surroundings and feel comfortable with their performance, costume(s), and being onstage. Lighting, music cues, set changes, and all other logistics for an organized and professional performance are rehearsed so that the students make the best impression possible.

Why a dress rehearsal?

Often parents question the importance of the dress rehearsal for their child. In fact, the key to a successful performance for your child is the dress rehearsal. Here's why:

- The stage is much larger than the classroom and is often intimidating to the children.
- The stage lights can be frightening and disorienting to young children.
- Modifications to the choreography can be made at dress rehearsal. A student who misses the rehearsal will not have the chance to practice any of the changes onstage.
- Students often rely on the classroom mirrors to help them with spacing and formations. Having the chance to dance without the security of the mirror *before* the performance is very important for their confidence.
- Students have the chance to practice their stage entrances and exits and get used to being in such a large space.
- Confidence is critical to a successful performance. The dress rehearsal offers your child the chance to feel ready for the show.
- The dress rehearsal is the only opportunity for parents to videotape or take pictures of the show.

And there's another big reason why the dress rehearsal is important. One of the main objectives of our curriculum is to teach the spirit of teamwork and commitment to classmates. When children miss the rehearsal, the result can be confusion for the remaining students (an absence affects spacing and timing).

We run an organized and timely dress rehearsal; your help with the process will guarantee a professional production. Please arrive at least 30 minutes before your scheduled time. Students may arrive in their first performance costume or may change backstage.

Finale

All students are required to participate in the finale, which will be rehearsed during the last month of classes. The finale **WILL NOT** be rehearsed at Dress Rehearsal. All students will remain in their last performance costume for the finale. Students will be given a participation medal to wear in the finale.

Dress-rehearsal guests

One parent or guardian may accompany each student to the dress rehearsal. Please, no siblings who do not dance! Additional attendees at the dress rehearsal must pay the full cost of a recital ticket.

Audience etiquette

Enthusiastic applause is encouraged; however, it is never appropriate to scream out a child's name or yell in any way.

Children should not bring handheld electronic games or other devices with sounds and/or lights that could be a distraction for other audience members.

Because we present a professional performance, we ask that everyone remain seated during the entire performance. If you do leave the auditorium during the show you will be allowed back into the auditorium only between dances. This rule is strictly enforced; please do not create a disturbance with the auditorium ushers in regard to this policy. Children must remain seated for the entire performance. If you are reading this still then you deserve a treat. Have your dancer see Miss Mia privately for a small treat as congratulations for being prepared. Allowing children to run around or otherwise disrupt the performance is not fair to other audience members. The use of video or flash photography is strictly prohibited during the recital. It is important that you pass this policy on to your recital guests. This is distracting to the dancers and also a violation of copyright laws.

➤ **One parent or guardian may accompany each student to dress rehearsal. Please if possible, no siblings who do not dance!**

PART 6: Student Drop-off and Pickup Dress Rehearsals

Parents or guardians should bring the students the performance venue, where they will be called by class to come backstage. Parents or guardians must remain in the auditorium until their children have been dismissed.

Students will be dismissed from rehearsal once they have completed all of their routines. When a class has completed its last performance, a teacher or older dancer will bring the group to the left of the stage to be picked up. It is the parent's responsibility to quickly change dancers into their next costume so they are ready to go back on stage.

PART 7: Recital Photography, Videos, and T-Shirts, Awards

Awards

Dancer's who will be performing in their 5th, 10th, or 15th recital at Mansfield Academy of Dance this year, are eligible for special recognition and a trophy at the close of our recital. Please make sure to sign up in the office for five year awards.

Recital photos

Class photos will be taken by Donner Photography on Monday June 7th at the studio. All students are required to be present for their class picture. There are no exceptions. After the group photo shoot, students will have solo portraits made in any or all of their costumes. There is no obligation to purchase photos. Please arrive at least half an hour before your child's scheduled time since photo shoots sometimes run ahead of schedule. Please plan to attend for at least an hour.

Hair and makeup

Hair and makeup should be done to highlight features for performance. All female students are required to wear makeup: lip color, blush, eye shadow (not blue), and mascara work well. For the boys, a little blush works well.

Uniform hairstyles are required. All female students must wear their hair in a bun or French braid with the ends tucked in. No bangs or beads are allowed. Dancers with short hair must pull their hair away from the face and slick it down.

Photo purchase

Photos will be available for viewing and purchase at our in studio rehearsal

Recital T-Shirt Purchase

The Mansfield Academy of Dance commemorative recital T-shirt is made available for purchase by students and parents. The professionally designed shirt must be preordered and will be distributed at dress rehearsal.

PART 8: Recital Tickets

Ticket Policies

Cost is \$10 for each additional ticket beyond those included in the recital package. These can be purchased at picture day, either rehearsal or on the day of the show.

PART 9: Recital Yearbook/Program

Each year the Mansfield Academy of Dance publishes an annual yearbook/program for the recital. “Well-wisher” and commercial ads are available for purchase. All students have the opportunity to purchase and sell ads, but participation is not required.

The Recital Is for Everyone

When everyone puts the children first, the recital experience is one they’ll never forget. We appreciate your compliance with the rules and guidelines in this handbook and hope that the Mansfield Academy of Dance annual recital will be as fun and exciting for you as it is for all of our staff. Thank you for working with us to create a memorable educational experience through performance for all of our students.