

DANCE STUDIO POLICIES & STUDENT HANDBOOK

A guide to writing and revising
the necessary operating terms
of your business



Why your policies should be at the heart of your business operations...



- It often takes a misunderstanding, upset, or complete breakdown in your business to uncover where you need a policy
- Studio policies are essentially the terms and agreements for which they are doing business with you
- Your handbook is the user guide to participating at your studio
- If you create a policy, be ready to enforce the consequences or hold people accountable

Studio policies areas of focus

- Download a checklist here:
<http://www.dancestudioowner.com/members/Dance-studio-policies-checklist.cfm>
- 1. Tuition and fee general information
- 2. Tuition and fee due date, late fees, discounts, refunds, credits, payment methods
- 3. Releases, consent forms, and privacy policies
- 4. Attendance and participation
- 5. Dress code, class attire, student/parent conduct, studio rules and regulations

**The goal: Parents and/or students
will read, understand,
agree to, and follow your policies!**

Tips for delivering important info



- Visual cues help!
- Add images to your text
- Short snippets or bullet points
- Lead with important deadlines
- Add releases, consents, and imperative info to registration forms that must be agreed to
- Be consistent about posting your communication through multiple channels: website, Facebook, email, printed, bulletin boards, in class, waiting rooms, etc.

Tuition and fee general information

- Tuition and fee prices
- How tuition is structured or calculated
- Operating dates such as a school year or semesters
- Holiday or vacation observance as it pertains to tuition, calendar
- Registration fee
- Performance fees
- Additional fees if applicable
- Dance team or company tuition or fees
- Drop-in class fees/pricing



Example: How tuition is calculated

Same rate every month

- The school year will consist of (36) thirty-six weekly class sessions, monthly tuition is based on the average of 3.6 classes per month. Some months have as few as (2) two weeks others have as many as (5) five.

Per class rate per month

- Some monthly sessions have 5 dance classes. Some months have three. Tuition is calculated based on the number of times a class meets per month. When a class meets 5 times in one month, you will pay for five classes. If it only meets 3 times per month, you will only pay for 3 classes in that month.

Tuition & fee due date, late fees, discounts, refunds, credits, payment methods

- Tuition & fees due date
- How you bill, post fees, auto bill or invoice
- Late payment policy
- Grace period
- Late fee
- Unpaid balance policy
- Returned check fee
- Refunds and credits for tuition, costumes or dancewear
- Discounts if applicable
- Payment methods accepted and offered



Know what exceptions you will make or not, it's up to you!

Non-Refundable

- Credit will not be given for missed classes due to illness, snow days, or personal commitments.
- You are welcome to make-up any class missed.
- Students may make up any class missed in any appropriate class of their choice at any time within the school year.

Refundable

- When student sustains an injury that does not permit them to participate over an extended period of time a credit or refund will be issued. In some cases, a doctor's note is required.
- If a very young student is not ready to participate in a class after several visits, a refund of tuition will be given.
- If a class is cancelled due to insufficient registration a full refund will be given.

Releases, consent forms and privacy policies

- General liability release of claims
- Consent for medical treatment of a minor
- Photography and video release
- Privacy policy



Examples: Photo/Video Releases

Permission based, controlled by studio and director

- I give permission for [STUDIO NAME] to take photos of me or my child while participating in [STUDIO NAME] activities for promotional purposes. Names of students will not be used or disclosed. I understand that for the safety of our dancers and their families, all photos and or videos of [STUDIO NAME] classes, rehearsals and/or performances, including dancers in [STUDIO NAME] costumes, will not be published or posted publicly, in printed or electronic format, without the express written permission of [STUDIO NAME] and the Director.

Broad use, no payment given

- Parents/legal guardians give their permission to the [STUDIO NAME] to use photos and/or video of their minor child without remuneration in connection with studio publications, advertising, television and news coverage.

Attendance and participation



- Attendance expectations and minimum participation policy
- Tardiness
- Make-up classes
- Inclement weather/snow cancellations
- Sick
- Injury
- Not ready to participate/separate
- Insufficient registration
- Faculty change or teacher substitute
- Schedule subject to change
- Information about studio news, announcements, closings
- Class add/drop, opt out, or studio withdrawal process

Reserve the right to...

Determine Class Placement

- We reserve the right to place students according to their age, ability, and dance experience.
- Some classes require pre-requisites or permission of instructor.

Insufficient Registration or Instructor Change

- We reserve the right to cancel any class with insufficient registration.
- All faculty members are subject to change.
- In the event of a change, we will always substitute with an equally qualified instructor.

Dress code, class attire, student/parent conduct, studio rules & regulations



- Dress code and class attire expectations by class, genre, or level
- Where to purchase dancewear if applicable
- Class etiquette, performance etiquette
- Student Expectations (conduct)
- Parent Expectations (conduct)
- Lost and found
- Visitor Information
- Studio facility specific information: entering, exiting, parking, safety, no smoking, securing valuables, lockers, video surveillance, closed circuit monitoring, etc.

Reframe the tricky points...

- For your **convenience**.... We make auto pay/auto billing available
- For the **safety** of our dancers...we schedule class viewing and make closed circuit TV's available
- To get the **most out of your dance education**...A respectful attitude and regular attendance is expected at each class.
- Your **annual registration fee**...covers non-tuition essentials such as insurance, music licenses, studio communication administration and helps keep your monthly tuition costs lower



Put it all together in a student handbook



- A handbook can help your students and parents **better understand your policies while also orienting them to the studio.**
- This is where you can write a **welcome message**; share your **studio mission, vision**, and your expectations around **general conduct.**
- If you do testing or evaluations make this known as well as your **teaching philosophy**, methodology and criteria for **classroom etiquette.**
- It is useful to **restate all of the important policies** that were agreed upon at registration related to tuition and billing.
- Include **attendance expectations** such as how you handle make up classes, weather cancellations, or injury/illness.