

Decatur Park District

The Decatur Park District's

2024-2025

Dance and Drama

Policy Manual

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This Policy manual is provided so that you may become acquainted with the Decatur Park District's Dance and Drama policies and procedures. Please read this Policy Manual and keep it convenient for regular review. Please sign and return the [policy manual agreement form](#). Should you have any questions, please contact Alexis Riley, Cultural Arts Supervisor, at 217-619-8044 or ariley@decparcs.com or Megan Dickerson, Cultural Arts Manager, 217-619-8042 or mdickerson@decparcs.com.

Introduction

Welcome Dance and Drama students and family to the Decatur Park District Dance and Drama program. For many of you, this is a familiar return to the program and we are glad you are back! We are also excited to have a great group of new dancers and performers! 2024-25 welcomes us into our eighteenth season of quality programming. It is our highest aspiration to provide our students and their families with a safe, fun program where they are encouraged to grow as artists and people, to gain skills and confidence, develop respect for themselves and others, and to learn what an appreciation for the performing arts and dance can do for their personal growth.

Our goal is to give each student the best possible education and provide students with performing opportunities throughout the Decatur Park District. Through these performing opportunities, students learn responsibility, teamwork, gain confidence and are rewarded with a sense of accomplishment.

The Dance & Drama curriculum is comprehensive and designed to give each student the best possible education. Technique and discipline are stressed throughout each and every class. The Dance Curriculum includes a vigorous and professional approach in the training of the dancer and focuses on fulfilling national and state standards in the fine arts. As teachers, we continually use various teaching methods designed to provide a "fun atmosphere" through the training. Building confidence in each student's abilities and instilling a sense of commitment to themselves and their peers are important aspects of the Decatur Park District's training.

Whether the student decides to make a long-term commitment to the Decatur Park District's Dance & Drama program or stays with us only for a year or so, the education provided is important to their overall growth and development. Each Dance student is taught the proper techniques of movement fundamentals that will enhance their confidence as they pursue activities from routine walking and running to activities that require complicated movements. Each drama student is taught basic techniques of acting that will stimulate their imaginations and help develop self-confidence and self-esteem. We believe that the arts and the Cultural Arts programs we offer at the Decatur Park District enrich the students' life. Thank you for this opportunity to enlighten and liberate each student through our Dance & Drama Program.

Your Role

We need your help to ensure that your child's learning experience at the studio is positive; we maintain an open door of communication with all parents and encourage parents to communicate with us any concerns they may have. The arts are a valuable part of your child's overall education. Please take an interest in your child's class or classes:

1. Make class a priority. Please do not permit your student to arrive late or leave early.
2. Have students to class 5 minutes early so they are prepared.
3. Encourage your student to set up a weekly practice schedule even if it is only for 15 minutes a day. Ask them to show you any new steps they have learned. Watch your dancer practice. A student will not excel in the classroom if they do not do their homework, and the same is true in dance if they do not practice.
4. Communicate with your instructor: If your child is ill or you know that they are going to miss a class please speak with the instructor or call Ms. Alexis; this way we can arrange for a make-up class.
5. Please review the guidelines of this handbook with your student.
6. Classes are closed

Your child is in safe hands with our staff. Parents are not allowed in the Studio during classes. We encourage you to drop off your student and use their class time for yourself!

The Students Role

All students are expected to follow these guidelines:

- Please do not bring gum, food or drinks (other than water) into the studio.
- Please dispose of any trash into trash receptacles.
- Please remain quiet in the waiting room until your class begins.
- Please be respectful of yourself, your classmates and your instructor.
- Listen and do your best! Remember, you are here to learn.
- Never say "I Can't"

Attendance- PLEASE READ

To reach full potential in class, a student must attend on a consistent basis. We expect regular attendance from all our students. If a student must miss a class please call Alexis Riley at 217-619-8044 or Megan Dickerson at 217-619-8042. If you know in advance that your student will miss two or more consecutive classes, please contact his or her instructor.

Students who accrue more than 3 unexcused classes may be moved into another class or dismissed from the recital piece. Poor class attendance can result in dismissal from the dance recital routine. There are no refunds for classes missed. Please arrive 5-10 minutes early to each class. This will give you time to get your shoes on and use the restroom if needed. **Tuition is not refundable or transferable except in the instance of long-term illness or injury verified by a physician.**

*Company Class Attendance Policy: Company Dancers are expected to attend classes regularly. Absences must be communicated to the instructor directly, or through the Cultural Arts Supervisor. Dancers are allowed no more than 3 unexcused absences per semester, or the instructor reserves the right to request the dancer be moved to a lower level.

Inclement Weather

You will receive an e-mail notification if classes are cancelled due to bad weather, etc. We will make every attempt to cancel a class prior to 3:00 p.m. but since weather is unpredictable, please check your e-mail prior to class for the latest update. We will also have a cancellation notification on our Facebook Page (Arts at Decatur Park District)

Communication

We are excited to introduce the Band App for the 2023-2024 dance season. The app will be home for all dance related communication including announcements, schedules, and documents. The chat feature on the app will be the best method to reach staff and instructors. We will have trainings on the Band App the first week of classes to ensure our dance families know all of the features and best ways to utilize the app. Please know the Band App will be the main source of communication for us, but you can always call the Poage Arts and Recreation Center at 217-421-6648 or email ariley@decparcs.com. Note: Our regular office hours are Monday-Friday from 9am-5pm. During dance class times, we do not have someone available to answer the phones. "Like" us on Facebook (Arts at Decatur Park District) to get updates as new and exciting items happen in the Cultural Arts!

Recital

Dance Recitals will be held at on May 9 and May 10. You will receive a dance recital packet in March. This packet will give you all the important dates and information for the Spring Recital. Students must attend the dress rehearsal in order to participate in the recital. All accounts must be up to date by April 15th. Households with balances due will not be allowed to perform in the Recital. Attendance is always very important but especially in the 2nd semester when teachers are working on routines. **If a student accumulates three (3) or more unexcused absences their performance in the recital routine may be limited.** Costumes are ordered at the end of October. Once a costume is ordered for your student you are liable for the balance due on the costume. Please notify Ms. Alexis by October 11th if your student chooses not to participate in the Dance Recital, otherwise you will be billed for a costume.

Senior Spotlights are recognition of the commitment a high school senior has made to the study of dance. Seniors are responsible for costuming, choreography and music selection & all must be approved by Ms. Alexis/Ms. Megan. Decatur Park District is not responsible for ordering costumes. **Submissions for Senior Solos are due no later than December 1.**

Discipline Procedures

Discipline is essential to learning; occasionally we may have a disciplinary problem with a dancer. Almost always a word or two from the instructors takes care of the inappropriate behavior. When verbal comments have not stopped the misbehavior, the following disciplinary actions are in place to provide the framework for the instructors to deal with this inappropriate behavior. A positive approach will be used regarding discipline. Staff will periodically review rules with participants. If inappropriate behavior occurs, prompt resolution will be sought specific to each individual situation. The Park District reserves the right to dismiss a participant whose behavior endangers the safety of the instructor or participants or negatively impacts the recreational experience of other participants. If your child needs a special accommodation for the dance program, please contact Megan Dickerson or Alexis Riley.

Basic disciplinary action includes:

Verbal warning(s) and/ or supervised time-out (1-10 min) from the program, should the behavior persist, a written conduct report will be completed and the parent will be contacted by the instructor to discuss the situation and ask for assistance in helping the child become successful. The program supervisor will be apprised by the instructor of any consistent inappropriate behavior in the class. The supervisor may observe the class and/or speak to the parent. Suspensions from the program can be authorized by the Cultural Arts Supervisor or Cultural Arts Manager for a designated period of time. Dismissal from the program can be authorized by the Cultural Arts Manager. If inappropriate behavior persists or the behavior completely disrupts a program, removal from the activity may be necessary.

Safety and Security

The following rules are of extreme importance and we strongly urge Parent(s) and/or Guardian(s) to discuss them with their Dancer(s) and/or Actor(s) and make certain that they are fully understood.

1. Please inform the teacher if your student will be walking, riding a bike, etc. to and from their class. (A note from the Parent(s)/Guardian(s) at the beginning of the year would be helpful.)
2. All students must stay in the building after class until their transportation arrives. Parents must be prompt when picking up students. We cannot be responsible for students unless they are participating in class due to class schedules.
3. Absolutely no food, gum or drinks are allowed in the Studio. Only plastic water bottles with lids will be allowed in the studio.

Dress Code

Dancers are expected to adhere to the dancewear requirements listed in this manual. Attire is part of the discipline of dance and assists the instructor in observing the dancer's form and technique. All Dance Students must have their hair pulled away from their face and secured in place. It is necessary for every student to strictly adhere to the dress code. Students dressed inappropriately may be asked to observe class.

All students in Advanced and Level IV and above classes are encouraged to have a dance bag with the following items: Appropriate dance shoes, comb or brush, bobby pins, barrettes, rubber bands or hair bands, notebook and a pen or pencil.

Please label all dancewear and shoes with the dancer's name. We find many lost shoes with no name and have no way of finding their owners.

Class Attire

Beginning Dance: (Pre-school – kindergarten)

Girls: Pink Tights and any color leotard; dance skirts are allowed, pink ballet shoes. No house slippers please

Boys: Shorts or sweatpants with a white t-shirt tucked in, white socks and black ballet shoes

Step Into Dance- will also require black tap shoes

Ballet/Pointe:

Girls: Pink Tights with feet, Black Leotard and ballet shoes (no slippers) required. Ballet skirts are allowed. No baggie shirts or sweatshirts, no jewelry except small pierced earrings allowed. Hair pulled into a bun. NO BAGGY CLOTHES!

Boys: Black shorts or sweatpants with a white t-shirt tucked in, white socks and black ballet shoes. NO BAGGY CLOTHES!

Lyrical:

Girls: Ballet attire or dance shorts, capris or dance pants. Colored leotard and tights may be worn. Lyrical theatrical half-sole shoes are required for all lyrical classes. Hair must be pulled away from the face.

Boys: Black shorts or sweatpants with a white t-shirt tucked in, white socks and black ballet shoes. NO BAGGY CLOTHES!

Tap, Jazz Hop and Hip Hop:

Girls: Leotard, sweatpants and tights or dance shorts, capris or dance pants may be worn. No Pants past the shin for TAP. No pants dragging on the floor for Jazz. Black Tap shoes for Tap, Black Jazz Oxfords for Jazz Hop, and Clean Street Shoes, Hip Hop/Jazz Sneakers, or Black Jazz Oxfords for Hip Hop. NO BAGGY CLOTHES!

Boys: Sweatpants, shorts and a t-shirt, Black Tap shoes for Tap, Black Jazz Oxfords for Jazz, and Clean Street Shoes, Hip Hop/Jazz Sneakers, or Black Jazz Oxfords for Hip Hop. NO BAGGY CLOTHES!

Drama Classes:

Please wear loose fitting clothing that you are comfortable to move around in and tennis shoes. NO OPEN TOE SHOES!

Dancewear Sources

Grace's Dancewear:	6045 E. US Rt. 36 Decatur, IL 62521 (217)855-7927
Dance Distributors	www.dancedistributors.com 1-800-33Dance
Discount Dance Supply:	www.discountdance.com 1-800-328-7107

DANCE CURRICULUM

DECATUR PARK DISTRICT DANCE CLASSES

The Decatur Park District's Dance program offers a variety of classes for pre-school through adult. The Introductory classes for ages 2 – 5 introduce students to basic dance concepts that are age appropriate. 5 and 6-year old's will enjoy our Step Into Dance classes which utilizes basic technique of ballet, tap and/or jazz. At age 6 we have classes that will develop dancers in the techniques of ballet, jazz, hip hop, lyrical and tap. Performance opportunities are available to all, and an end of the year recital on May 5 and 6 culminates the dance program. Those interested in performing in the recital must take both semesters of dance.

Introduction to Dance Classes:

Intro to Dance I (2 - 3) introduces your child to the world of dance. Creative and age-appropriate activities help develop coordination, body awareness, and dance discipline.

Intro to Dance II (3 - 4) uses creative and age-appropriate activities to develop coordination, body awareness, and dance discipline.

Intro to Dance III (4 - 5) develops fundamental skills of dance through creative play and the use of music, drama, and ballet steps.

Combo Classes:

Step Into Dance (5 - 7) is a more formal introduction to 2 different genres of dance. Dancers will perform 2 recital pieces. Dancers will need ballet and tap shoes. Dancers must be in kindergarten to participate in this class.

Ballet/Tap Combo (6-8) offers your dancer the opportunity to learn both ballet and tap dance styles, that are age and skill appropriate, in one class period. In ballet, your dancer will learn classical training with concentration on technique, coordination of the arms and legs, and combinations across the floor. In tap, we utilize the teachings of Al Gilbert and focus on the rhythmic musical theatre tradition of tap dance

Dance Styles (ages 6 & up):

Ballet classes provide classical training with concentration on technique, coordination of the arms and legs, and combinations across the floor.

Pointe is for our most advanced Ballet Dancer and works on refinement of technique and artistic expression on Pointe. Pointe Dancers must be enrolled in two Ballet classes or one Ballet and one Lyrical class.

Tap classes utilize the teachings of Al Gilbert and focus on the rhythmic musical theatre tradition of tap dance.

Jazz will focus on learning proper dance technique such as isolations of the body, improving performance quality and developing complex rhythms and patterns. Students will be exposed to various styles of jazz such as Broadway, Street and Contemporary to help develop a well-rounded dancer.

Lyrical Dance (Beginner, Intermediate, Advanced) fuses ballet, jazz, and modern dance styles. Class focuses on conveying musicality and emotion through movement and learned choreography.

Contemporary (14+) combines elements of several dance genres including modern, jazz, lyrical and classical ballet, in an attempt to explore the natural energy and emotions of their bodies. Students will learn to use their bodies in a variety of ways, and they focus on breathing, posture, and emotional state to establish a mind-body connection.

Hip Hop (Elementary, Middle School, High School) encompasses street dance styles primarily performed to hip hop music. Classes include a wide range of styles including breaking, locking and popping.

Adult Classes (18+) are designed to be fun, educational and a great work out! We offer Adult Tap which develops a variety of skill levels and utilizes the teaching of Al Gilbert while focusing on the rhythmic musical theatre tradition of tap dance. Adult Booty Ballet will consist of a barre warm up followed by upbeat center floor exercises and combinations.

Company Class is for the more advanced, dedicated dancer/performer. Classes include ballet and tap. Enrollment is by invitation and/or audition.

DANCE LEVEL DESCRIPTIONS

Moving from one level to the next is determined by the Decatur Park District staff. It is based on age, ability, attendance, and attitude. We respect your concerns in regard to your children, but our staff works together diligently placing the students where we feel they are best suited. Most dance levels are multi-year, meaning a student may spend 1, 2 or more years in a level until that student has attained the necessary skills to move to the next level. The purpose of this is to ensure that the students are participating in classes that are best suited for them. Just as in any activity, some children develop their dance skills at a faster rate, while others need to take their time. It is important to remember that it takes years to train a dancer, and even professional performers and teachers continue their education and take classes throughout their careers.

This template covers the basic areas of learning for all youth dance classes at The Decatur Park District. Teachers customize this template with specific terms and activities for each dance discipline and age group. Activities become more complex as dancers advance in age and skill level.

1. Dance etiquette
 - Understand and use proper attire
 - Show respect for the teacher and other dancers
 - Work together with other dancers as an ensemble
2. How the body moves in dance
 - Identify the body parts and muscles used in the dance discipline
 - Understand and describe how body parts are used in the dance discipline
 - Understand and use proper alignment
3. Vocabulary and movement of the dance discipline
 - Understand and use correct vocabulary for movements, positions, and stage directions
 - Understand the role of space and use space appropriately
 - Execute movements and positions in the correct direction within given dance sequences
4. Music and dance
 - Identify the meter and rhythm of a piece of music
 - Understand and identify the tempo and dynamics of a piece of music
 - Understand what music is associated with the dance discipline and why
 - Understand the phrasing of a piece of music and create and perform dance sequences to fit that piece of music
5. History of dance
 - Understand the origins of the dance discipline and how the discipline has developed over time
 - Research historical and current teachers and performers in the discipline
 - Understand how other dance disciplines relate to ballet as a foundational dance discipline
6. Using dance to communicate
 - Identify the emotion(s) associated with a piece of music
 - Identify and use appropriate movements to show emotion
 - Create movement sequences to tell a story (assigned by the teacher or from personal experience)
 - Discuss the meaning and interpretation of dances observed or performed
7. Critical thinking
 - Observe classmates and provide feedback using appropriate vocabulary and correct technique
 - Observe and critique a performance (live, if possible, otherwise on video), discuss technique, style, music, movement, and mood
8. Performance
 - Learn a choreographed dance and perform it for an audience
 - Understand how lighting and costuming can contribute to the meaning of a performance
 - Critique the performance, including the execution of the dance and the integration of costumes, lights, scenery, and the audience with the dance.
9. Auditioning
 - Understand what is expected from the performer during an audition
 - Know what research will help in preparing for an audition
 - Select materials (music or script) of an appropriate length and form
 - Understand how to dress appropriately for an audition, both clothing and dance shoes
 - Develop a resume
 - Understand how the performer should present himself or herself on stage
 - Follow up the audition with a thank you note

Decatur Park District Arts Code of Conduct

Our Arts programs operate on the following code of conduct. All violations will be handled on an individual basis.

1. I will accept responsibility for myself.
2. I will respect the rights of others.
3. I will treat property with respect.
4. I will solve all problems peacefully.
5. I will always do my best.

ARTS Discipline Policy: the following situations are considered violations of the Arts Code of Conduct

1. Disruptive Behavior/Horseplay

2. Physical Confrontation/Physical Violence with Staff or student

Causing or attempting to cause physical injury to any staff or student

3. Theft

The taking or using of public or private property without permission or authorization

4. Use or Possession of Alcohol, Tobacco, Illegal Drugs, or Weapons

The use or possession of alcohol, tobacco, or illegal drugs during any Park District activity/excursion trip is prohibited. Possession of an object intended to be used in a menacing manner for the purpose of intimidating or injuring others is prohibited.

5. Vandalism

Showing disrespect for the property of others, games, equipment, studio, ballet barres, etc. is prohibited.

6. Verbal Abuse/Profanity/Obscenity to Anyone

Profane and obscene language or gestures, or possession of magazines/literature or articles of clothing that suggest an overt sexual nature are not tolerated. If you have to ask if it is "bad", don't say it.

7. Willful Defiance of Authority

Failure of a student to STOP doing/saying something that a staff member has directed them to stop doing is prohibited.

We have a three strikes rule in regards to violations of the Code of Conduct, although consequences dependent upon the severity of the infraction:

- Three verbal warnings = A written warning
- Three written warnings = A suspension
- Three suspensions = Expulsion

2024-25 Policy Manual Code of Conduct Agreement Form

Must be signed by both the parent/guardian (for students under 18) as well as the student

Student

I understand and will abide by the Decatur Park District's guidelines and rules outlined in the Dance and Drama policy manual. I further understand that any violation of these policies may result in consequences outlined in the Discipline Procedures portion of this policy manual, including suspension or expulsion from the Decatur Park District's Dance and Drama Program.

Date: _____ Student's Name (please print) _____

Student's Signature: _____
(For students who are unable to sign their name a Parent or Guardian may sign)

Parent or Guardian

As a parent or guardian of this student, I have read the policy manual and discipline policy. I understand that this policy is designed to ensure the safety and well-being of each student. I further understand that any violation of this policy may result in consequences outlined in the policy manual, including suspension or expulsion from the Decatur Park District's Dance and Drama Program.

Date: _____ Parent or Guardian's Name (please print) _____

Parent or Guardian's Signature: _____

This sheet must be returned by the first day of your student's class.