**Kentucky Dance Academy Handbook 2021-2022**

**Mission Statement**

At **Kentucky Dance Academy**, we are dedicated to providing the highest quality of pre-professional dance training in our community.

Our **students** are instilled with artistic integrity, a confidence in individuality, inner strength with outward technical precision, and a path to future success.

Our **families** are confident in our thoughtful instruction, goal-directed curricula, and transparent business model.

Our **audiences** are inspired through our engaging storytelling, joy of movement, and passionate pursuit of excellence.

**Letter from the Academy Director**

Dear dance families,

It is my pleasure and my great honor to be able to welcome each of you to our fifth season of Kentucky Dance Academy! Below is a brief explanation of KDA’s goals, principles, and why we do what we do.

KDA is a pre-professional dance education center founded on the principles of transparent business practices, performance-based technique, and individual artistic integrity. After years of learning, performing, teaching, and directing at several schools across the country, I decided that the time was right to strike out on my own to form the best dance school I could imagine. I spent the better part of a year thinking critically about everything I have learned from my time in the dance world- really considering what I wanted to keep versus what I wanted to change. The result is a blend of old and new dance worlds- a combination of the best tried-and-true teaching methods with an innovative new policy of openness of curricula.

KDA has been founded physically in the best possible location- Frankfort, Kentucky. As a born and bred Kentuckian, I naturally have a soft spot for the Bluegrass State, but it goes beyond merely an affinity for my home state and hometown. As a young dancer striving to piece together the best possible dance education, my parents and I sacrificed countless hours in the car driving to Lexington, Louisville, and Cincinnati to larger, more pre-professionally driven schools. At the time, I assumed that I was one of a very few people desirous of a professional level dance education in Central Kentucky- though in returning home as a professional dancer and dance educator, it became apparent that I was mistaken. I am surrounded daily by dedicated and devoted young people wanting exactly what I did, and all that stands in their way is access to the education. I fully believe KDA can be the pre-professional dance school to serve all of Central Kentucky outside of the major metropolitan areas.

I have been so fortunate in finding several like-minded dancers and dance instructors in the area, and I am thrilled to be able to welcome back our outstanding faculty- Caroline Combs, Brittany Hudson-Trent, Andrea Oney, and Suzanna Benassi. Each one of these artists are dedicated to providing each KDA student with the tools necessary to break into the competitive and selective professional/college dance world.

This season, we will be staging two performances in the Central Kentucky area- our annual “The Nutcracker” in December 2022, and a new work (TBD) in Spring 2023. “The Nutcracker” is an American holiday tradition, and already a Kentucky Dance Academy tradition as we follow up our sold-out performances from our first four seasons. Our Spring Performance will be a multi-genre dance celebration of every class we offer at KDA- a pre-professional dance performance and so much more than just a recital!

We’re excited to keep growing, changing, and evolving- thank you for being on the journey with us!

Sincerely,

Amanda Whites

Academy Director

Kentucky Dance Academy

**Kentucky Dance Academy 2022-2023**

August 13 Back-To-Dance Bash and Parent Orientation (Full Studio)

August 15 Classes Begin

August 19-21 Jazz/Contemporary Weekend Intensive with Bianca Brandon (Pre-Professional Levels)

August 26-28 Mindset Coaching with Ashley Mowrey (Full Studio)

September 5 Labor Day (No Classes)

September 12-17 Bring Someone Special Week (Full Studio)

October 3-7 Fall Break (No Classes)

October 22 “The Nutcracker” Participation Fees Due (Optional Performance)

November 10 No Classes- Candlelight Weekend Kickoff in Downtown Frankfort

November 21-25 Thanksgiving Break (No Classes)

December 5-10 Family Observation Week (Full Studio)

December 14-15 Dress Rehearsal “The Nutcracker” (Optional Performance)

December 16-17 Performances “The Nutcracker” (Optional Performance)

December 16 Last Day of Classes

January 9 Classes Resume

January 11 MLK Day (No Classes)

January 21 Spring Performance Fees Due (Full Studio)

February 7-13 Bring Someone You Love Week (Full Studio)

February 20 Presidents Day (No Classes)

April 3-7 Spring Break (No Classes)

April TBD Spring Performance (Full Studio)

May 15-20 Family Observation Week (Full Studio)

May 27 Last Day of Classes

**Dress Code**

At KDA, our dress code will be enforced at all times by all instructors in all disciplines. Some basic things you will need to know are:

-Leotards and tights are clothing that are designed to need no undergarments. Panties and/or briefs are never necessary under a dancer’s leotard and tights. As dancers with breasts develop, some dancers desire a sports bra under their dance clothes. This is permitted, though all instructors ask that bras are as designed in such a way they are as unnoticeable as possible under dance clothes (i.e similar in color to the dance clothes or matching the dancer’s skin tone, have straps similar to the dance clothes being worn, etc.).

-Dancers with penises and testicles will also need a dance belt (a tight fitting undergarment specifically made for dancers to wear under tights or costumes) under their dance clothes as they develop- we recommend dancers begin using a dance belt at age 11. There is a GREAT resource for male dancers/dancers with penises to learn about the fit and how-to’s of dance belts here: [Doctor Dancebelt's Guide: Everything male ballet dancers need to know about buying and wearing dance belts and tights](http://www.dancebelt.info/)

- Hair styles are as important to a dance dress code as leotards and tights. By having hair securely fixed in a bun (the most preferred hairstyle for most disciplines), instructors can easily see the placement of the neck and head, easily correct any misplaced upper body parts, and can have a uniform and respectful group of young artists. Dancers benefit from a proper bun by observing their placement in the mirror quickly and easily, as well as dancing without the distraction of hair hitting their face or eyes as they move. Proper hair securement and style is so important at KDA that our Dance Lounge has pins, hair elastics, etc. for dancers to use when they forget their own.

- Jewelry is permitted within certain limitations at KDA. Dancers may wear stud or small dangle earrings, small necklaces, and small bracelets at any time in any class. Dancers should avoid any large hoop or long dangling earrings while dancing, as these can become caught on clothing, hair, or other dancers resulting in injury. Dancers are discouraged from wearing any oversized jewelry as it can also become caught on clothing, hair, or other dancers, and may be distracting or painful during class. Rings are permitted in classes as long as there is no partnering work or gymnastics, since rings can cause injuries to dancers’ hands. KDA also encourages dancers to not wear extremely valuable or personally meaningful jewelry, as we cannot guarantee its safety in the dressing rooms or studios.

-Any concerns about modesty in dancewear will be decided upon a case-by-case basis by the parents and/or guardians of the dancer and the Academy Director. KDA is flexible in accommodating any modesty concerns for individuals and will alleviate any concerns for those with sincerely held religious or other beliefs that may make dancewear uncomfortable or unwearable. This includes, but is not limited to, religious headwear, discomfort with backless or sleeveless styles, discomfort with sheer tights and hosiery, and form fitting leotards.

**Dress Code Expectations and Penalties:**

Dancers ARE EXPECTED to ALWAYS follow dress code- we have these expectations and guidelines for specific reasons, and it interferes with our ability to teach effectively if dancers are not dressed appropriately.

Dancers with specific concerns regarding modesty, body image issues, or comfort in the recommended dress code should absolutely speak to their instructor and the Academy Director for guidance- there are always solutions for dancers!

If a dancer is out of dress code twice in a row, the Academy Director will contact the dancer’s parent or guardian. Often, parents and guardians are either unaware of the situation and will address it with their dancer. Sometimes the parent or guardian will not realize the dancer is missing a piece of dress code and the Academy Director will help them obtain it. And occasionally, there is a disconnect between the dancers’ comfort level and the dress code and the parent/guardian, Academy Director, and dancer will work together to find a healthy solution.

**Youth Division:**

Female Identifying: Leotard of any color (attached skirts permitted, though discouraged for classes including Acro), pink or skin tone tights, and pink or skin tone ballet shoes/black tap shoes/black jazz shoes/clean tennis shoes/transition tights to access bare feet.

Male Identifying: Play clothes/exercise clothes of any color (shirts and pants without writing or designs strongly preferred), white socks, black ballet shoes/black tap shoes/black jazz shoes/clean tennis shoes/bare feet.

Non-Binary Dancers: May comply with either male or female identifying dress codes as comfortable and applicable.

All dancers over 2 years of age with hair at or below chin level MUST secure hair in a bun or ponytail for every class.

**Pre-Professional Division Ballet:**

Female Identifying: Leotard of any color (no attached skirts permitted), pink or skin tone tights, pink or skin tone ballet or pointe shoes. Ladies may also wear a removable skirt for pointe or pre-pointe classes, at the instructor’s discretion.

Male Identifying: Solid color tee shirt or tank top, solid color men’s tights, shorts, or athletic pants. Black or white socks, and black or white ballet shoes.

Non-Binary Dancers: May comply with either male or female identifying dress codes as comfortable and applicable.

All dancers with hair below chin level must have hair secured in a bun. A proper ballet bun uses at least one hair elastic, several bobby pins, and an optional bun cover or hair net.

**Pre-Professional Division Jazz:**

Female Identifying: Black leotard and black bottoms (shorts, tights, jazz pants, or leggings). Black shoes or socks. All Level IV-VI dancers need warm-ups (jackets, hoodies, sweatpants, etc.)

Male Identifying: Black tee shirt or tank, black bottoms (shorts, tights, jazz pants, or leggings). Black shoes or socks. All Level IV-VI dancers need warm-ups (jackets, hoodies, sweatpants, etc.)

Non-Binary Dancers: May comply with either male or female identifying dress codes as comfortable and applicable.

All dancers with hair below chin level must have hair secured in a bun or ponytail.

**Pre-Professional Division Contemporary/Advanced Contemporary Training:**

\*Contemporary classes will have Training Days and Combination Days alternating week to week as determined by the instructor. Dress code must be followed on Training and Combination Days as described below\*

Training Days:

Female Identifying: Leotard of any color (no attached skirts permitted), tights of any color, bare feet or socks. All Level IV-VI dancers need warm-ups (jackets, hoodies, sweatpants, etc.)

Male Identifying: Solid color tee shirt or tank top, solid color men’s tights, shorts, or athletic pants. Bare feet or socks. All Level IV-VI dancers need warm-ups (jackets, hoodies, sweatpants, etc.)

Non-Binary Dancers: May comply with either male or female identifying dress codes as comfortable and applicable.

All dancers with hair below chin level must have hair secured in a bun or ponytail.

Combination Days:

All Dancers, All Genders: Dancer’s choice of clothing/ hairstyle/footwear. All clothing should be stretchy to accommodate full movement. All Level IV-VI dancers need warm-ups (jackets, hoodies, sweatpants, etc.)

**Pre-Professional Division Tap:**

Female Identifying: Leotard of any color (no attached skirts permitted), tights of any color, black tap shoes. All Level IV-VI dancers permitted warm-ups (jackets, hoodies, sweatpants, etc.)

Male Identifying: Solid color tee shirt or tank top, solid color men’s tights, shorts, or athletic pants. Black tap shoes. All Level IV-VI dancers permitted warm-ups (jackets, hoodies, sweatpants, etc.)

Non-Binary Dancers: May comply with either male or female identifying dress codes as comfortable and applicable.

All dancers with hair below chin level must have hair secured in a bun or ponytail.

**Pre-Professional Division Acro:**

Female Identifying: Leotard of any color (no attached skirts permitted), transition tights of any color, bare legs, or booty shorts/leggings, bare feet. Dancers may not wear loose fitting clothing over their dress code as it is unsafe for instructors to spot them during acrobatic moves. Absolutely no dangly earrings, necklaces, bracelets, or rings as this can be distracting or dangerous during class.

Male Identifying: Solid color and tight fitting tee shirt or tank top, solid color men’s tights, tight fitting shorts, or tight fitting athletic pants. Bare feet. Absolutely no dangly earrings, necklaces, bracelets, or rings as this can be distracting or dangerous during class.

Non-Binary Dancers: May comply with either male or female identifying dress codes as comfortable and applicable.

All dancers with hair below chin level must have hair secured in a bun or ponytail.

**Pre-Professional Division Theatre Dance:**

Female Identifying: Black leotard and black bottoms (shorts, tights, jazz pants, or leggings). Black character shoes (high heeled dance shoes). All Level IV-VI dancers need warm-ups (jackets, hoodies, sweatpants, etc.)

Male Identifying: Black tee shirt or tank, black bottoms (shorts, tights, jazz pants, or leggings). Black shoes or socks. All Level IV-VI dancers need warm-ups (jackets, hoodies, sweatpants, etc.)

Non-Binary Dancers: May comply with either male or female identifying dress codes as comfortable and applicable.

All dancers with hair below chin level must have hair secured in a bun or ponytail.

**Pre-Professional Division Hip Hop:**

All Dancers, All Genders: Dancer’s choice of workout clothes, leotard and tights with warm ups, etc. All dancers should wear clean tennis shoes, preferably only worn indoors to preserve our floor. Hair should be secured in a ponytail/clipped back out of face.

**Adult Hip Hop:**

Adult dancers are invited to follow the Pre-Professional Division dress code if desired, though also may choose to wear athletic/workout clothes. Clean tennis shoes are encouraged for Hip Hop.

**Classroom Etiquette and Conduct**

Just as dance has specific requirements for attire and hair styles, dance also has specific rules and requirements within the classroom environment. These are all passed down the dance generations, teacher to student, and create a culture of respect and integrity in the pre-professional and professional dance worlds. Below are the etiquette and conduct traditions we believe to be of the highest importance at KDA:

**Being early is on time, being on time is late, and being late is unacceptable.**

Just like in any professional setting, it is imperative that dancers arrive early for class to best prepare for the lesson ahead. Dancers need time to change, do their bun, stretch, and ready themselves for class- as well as have time for socializing (since talking to fellow dancers is discouraged in the studio rooms). All dancers need a MINIMUM of ten minutes to accomplish their pre-class requirements, and many dancers benefit from more time. If a dancer is late to class by fifteen minutes or less, we ask that they ask the instructor for permission to join the class in pauses between combinations, exercises, or activities. Dancers later than fifteen minutes should not attend class UNLESS they have already had the teacher approve their late arrival BEFORE class time.

Dancers in the Pre-Professional Division are also responsible for warming themselves up in the studio if they are late to class. This means giving themselves a good, thorough barre to catch up with their fellow dancers in class to avoid injury. For example, if a Level III dancer is late to class, missing plies and tendus at the barre, he/she will ask the teacher for permission to join, execute plies and tendus at the barre quickly and quietly as the class progresses around him/her, and then join the class on the next full combination once his/her body is warmed up and safe.

**The studio is for dancing- not for talking, eating, running, swinging, etc.**

From our youngest dancers on, we seek to instill respect and love for the studios we dance in. Each studio is comprised of specialized, safe flooring, necessary equipment, and lots of beautiful open space. Since the studios are designed specifically for dance, that’s what we do in them- dance!

One of the most difficult rules for a lot of young dancers to follow is the “no talking in class” rule. We at KDA believe that social connections are vital to a dancer’s mental health and overall enjoyment of dance, but ask that dancers limit their conversations and comments with fellow dancers out of respect for the art form and respect for the instructor leading the class. Dance, specifically ballet, is a silent art at its core, and we want to maintain the artistic integrity of our chosen art.

We at KDA, to ensure we keep our space clean and operational for generations of dancers, ask that no food or drink other than water be allowed in the studio rooms. We also ask, for the safety of all the dancers, that no students or siblings run in the studio before, after, or between classes, since this can lead to falls. We ask that no students swing on the barres for similar safety reasons.

**Dancers always say “Thank You” to their instructor.**

Across the dance world, in every pre-professional school and professional company, every dancer says thank you to their instructor after every class or rehearsal. How the dancers say thank you may vary from place to place, but it is almost always a curtsy or bow performed for the instructor, and a verbal “thank you” following. We at KDA think this is an important tradition to follow and ask all of our students to curtsy/bow to their instructor following each class and/or rehearsal.

**Dancers follow rules out of respect.**

Here at KDA, we believe that parents and dancers that choose to follow rules and guidelines out or respect, instead of under fear of penalties, are happier and healthier clients. Dancers and parents should want to follow any classroom rules, studio policies, or instructor requests out of love and respect for instructors, directors, choreographers, fellow dancers, and other dance families.

**Perfection is the goal- but mistakes are part of the journey.**

Dance is a VERY demanding art form- from the youngest of the Youth Division through the top level of the Pre-Professional Division, dancers will be challenged both mentally and physically in every class. Though all dancers are in pursuit an idealized “perfect” execution of every step, KDA seeks to foster an environment that encourages mistakes and slip-ups as part of the learning process. Though all instructors at KDA demand excellence and the utmost determination in every class, KDA’s studio will always be a safe space for expression, experimentation, and risk-taking.

**Tuition Policies**

KDA is dedicated to practicing transparent business. Families often wonder where their tuition money really goes, and we seek to answer that question as best we can.

One priority at KDA is that we never charge extra rates, such as registration fees, that do not directly benefit the instructors, dancers, or the facility of KDA. We also do not require dancers and their families to sign a yearly contract with us- lives, schedules, interests, and priorities change, often unexpectedly and/or mid-year. Our loyalties lie with families- not the other way around.

Another is that all instructors at KDA make a fair wage for their time and expertise. Each instructor at KDA has a wide and varied career, and each instructor has been specifically chosen to join our faculty to provide a new insight to better prepare our dancers for success. This selective process, and immense base of knowledge, means all of our instructors deserve the best possible rates for their high quality of work. Your tuition goes towards paying your instructor what they deserve.

A final priority is outfitting our facility with the best and safest hardware required for dance training. High level, pre-professional training requires a specialized floor (called a sprung floor) topped with a specific type of laminate flooring (marley). Dancers also require a large, unbroken space in which to dance, a high-quality sound system to project various types of music, sturdy barres, and large mirrors. These are all important investments in every dancers’ future, and your tuition pays to maintain and improve the facility for years to come.

**Due Dates**

Monthly tuition: Due the first of each month.

“The Nutcracker” participation fee: October 22nd, 2022

Spring Performance participation fee: January 21st, 2023

**Late Payments**

Tuition is due on or before the 1st working day of each calendar month. Tuition that is more than 5 days late will be responsible for a $25 late fee. We recognize that financial emergencies occur, please contact the Academy Director immediately if you are unable to pay tuition timely or in full.

**Withdrawal**

Families at KDA are not required to sign a yearly contract to dance with us. We do, however, assume that all dancers will continue their enrollment through the dance season- August-May 2022-2023. It is best to let us know of your decision to withdraw BEFORE tuition is due for the next month (the first working day of each month) to avoid any accidental payments. If a dancer and their family decide to withdraw mid-month, and has attended classes during that period, the rest of the month is pro-rated and returned to the family. If a dancer and their family has decided to withdraw mid-month and has not attended any classes during that period, then tuition can be refunded in full.

If you and your dancer decide to withdraw from classes for any reason, the following steps must be taken in order to ensure no unnecessary payments are made on your part:

-Notify the Academy Director of your decision to withdraw, along with the last date your child attended class (or approximate date- we have attendance books in each studio), via email.

-Notify any other instructors of your decision to withdraw via email.

You will receive confirmation of your withdrawal, as well as a total amount being refunded/pro-rated (assuming those options apply in the case of your withdrawal).

**Weather Cancellations**

In the event of bad weather, KDA will announce all cancellations via social media and email. For evening classes, KDA will announce all cancellations by 1:00 pm the day of. Morning classes (specifically classes that occur Saturdays) will be notified of all cancellations the night before by 9:00 pm. KDA generally, but not exclusively, follows Franklin County schools for cancellations.

In the event a particular day of the week has two or more weather-related cancellations, KDA will schedule a makeup day for those affected classes. Makeup days generally occur during Spring Break and will be announced the week before Spring Break.

**Makeup Classes**

Attending a makeup class is ultimately the responsibility of the family and dancer- KDA instructors keep track of attendance in all classes, and are always happy to suggest an appropriate makeup class option for dancers, though are not expected to inform families of any outstanding absences (except in cases of absences affecting performance quality- see “Rehearsal Attendance Policy” section below). Families may always request a summary of their dancer’s attendance by emailing the instructor or Academy Director to determine if they need to attend any makeup classes.

Any Youth Division dancer may attend a makeup class of the same age/discipline following an absence. If there are no other classes in the same age/discipline for the dancer, or if alternative class dates and times are unworkable, families must ask the class instructor or Academy Director for a makeup class option. Usually, dancers will be directed to take an age group below their own as a makeup in the event there are no class alternatives in their own age range. Families are expected to inform the instructor of the makeup class that their dancer is attending the class as a makeup- the instructor will then adjust the attendance book to reflect the makeup class.

Any Pre-Professional Division dancer may attend a makeup class in any discipline a level above or below them. For example, Level II dancers may attend a makeup ballet class with Levels I or III, or a Contemporary/Jazz/Acro/Tap makeup with the Level IV-VI classes in that genre. Dancers and families may ask instructors or the Academy Director for guidance on appropriate classes to take as makeup classes.

**Performance Opportunities**

At KDA we practice performance-based technique- dance education with a strong foundation in hands-on performance opportunities. KDA will have two performances- “The Nutcracker” December 16th-17th at the historic Grand Theatre in Frankfort and our Spring Performance (TBD) will be performed in the spring (dates TBA).

**The Nutcracker**

“The Nutcracker” is probably the best-known and best-loved ballet in America today, and KDA is thrilled to perform our own version of this classic this December. Though all students are encouraged to participate in this wonderful holiday experience, “The Nutcracker” will be an **OPTIONAL** performance opportunity for all students.

The participation fee for “The Nutcracker” will be due on October 22nd, 2022. This fee will cover: costumes, rehearsals, theatre rental, props/scenery, and other incidental costs associated with a live performance. The price of participation for each Division will be as follows:

Me and My Grownup and Special Needs Dance Classes: $60 (rehearsals conducted in-class, not on Saturdays)

Youth Division (Tiny Twirlers, Beginning Classes): $80

Pre-Professional Division (Levels I-VI): $90

All rehearsals will take place on Saturdays from October 29th through December 10th (excluding Thanksgiving weekend). Some Pre-Professional Division rehearsals MAY take place during usual class times, though this is contingent upon full class participation so as not to exclude any students opting out of the performance. Rehearsals are anticipated to be between half an hour to two hours in length each week, with schedules and casting announced on or before October 24th.

“The Nutcracker” has **MANDATORY** dress rehearsals (December 14th-15th) and **MANDATORY** performances (December 16th-17th).

**Spring Performance**

Our spring performance, TBD, will be a world premiere performance for KDA. To best embody our belief in performance as an important learning tool for all dancers, this is a **FULL-STUDIO** performance, meaning each class and dancer is expected to participate. Dancers may opt out with the understanding that usual class time will be partially devoted to rehearsals.

The participation fee will be due on January 21st, 2023. This fee will cover: costumes, rehearsals, theatre rental, props/scenery, and other incidental costs associated with a live performance. The price for each Division will be as follows:

Youth Division (Me and My Grownup, Tiny Twirlers, Special Needs Dance, and Beginning Classes): $60 (initial or only class); $40 (each additional class)

Pre-Professional Division (Levels I-VI): $70 (initial or only class); $50 (each additional class)

All rehearsals will take place during usual class times, with potential occasional Saturday rehearsals for leading roles. Casting and any additional rehearsals will be announced on or before January 30th, 2023.

Dress Rehearsal and the performance dates are TBA.

**Rehearsal Attendance Policy**

All dancers are expected to attend all rehearsals, though KDA instructors/choreographers understand there are situations beyond our control that may affect attendance. To put forward the best possible performance, dancers with less than an 80% attendance rate may be asked to attend extra private or semi-private rehearsals at the instructor/choreographer’s availability.

Any dancer or parent may also request a private or semi-private lesson with the instructor/choreographer at any time in the rehearsal process. We at KDA believe that dancers who feel comfortable and confident perform better and strive to give each student the necessary tools and knowledge to succeed onstage.

**Performance Withdrawal Policy**

If you decide to withdraw from any performance, the following steps must be taken:

* Please notify the Academy Director of your decision via email.
* Please notify any choreographers/instructors of your child (other than the Academy Director) via email.
* Costumes are ordered far in advance of performances and are unreturnable to all dance costume companies. Though KDA can refund a portion of your participation fee, please be aware actual cost of your costume (usually between $25-50, though highly dependent upon size, availability, style, etc.) is not refundable. The costume will be given to you upon its delivery to KDA or can be donated to KDA’s costume collection to be used in outreach or future performances.
* The Academy Director will decide the appropriate amount to refund to you following the email withdrawal procedure. This will depend upon the rehearsals left before performance, the remainder left after the costume fee is deducted, and any extra time the choreographer will need to spend re-setting the dance.
* Withdrawal from a performance is more difficult for all choreographers, dancers, and the Academy Director if it is closer to a performance date. We ask that if you must withdraw you let us know in the beginning of the rehearsal process to avoid any undue stress or choreographic rearrangement.

This Performance Withdrawal Policy DOES NOT apply to: severe illness/hospitalizations, personal emergencies, or family emergencies. In these listed situations, please email the Academy Director to discuss it on a case-by-case basis.

**Progression Through Levels**

**General Expectations**

Progression through levels of classes is a big concern for both parents and dancers in every dance school. Since KDA has been founded on a principle of transparency, we seek to make the process as clear and simple as possible.

**Youth Division**

Youth Division classes are based solely on age at the time of enrollment. All classes are structured to suit a particular age range, taking into account physical developmental milestones, cognitive developmental milestones, and social/emotional developmental milestones. Though some dancers may be ahead or behind on some or all these milestones, it is the belief at KDA that dancers need to stay in their age range through the Youth Track to ensure proper and safe physical development necessary for young dancers.

**Pre-Professional Division**

Pre-Professional Division classes all begin at age eight (at time of enrollment). After this initial entry purely by age into the Pre-Professional Division, level placement is dependent upon mastery of skills and comprehension of concepts.

All classes have their curricula available to parents, students, prospective students, etc. at all times in various forms (i.e. website, physical copies in the KDA studios, digital downloads). These are intended to be a tool used by instructors, students, and parents to gauge progress and mastery throughout the season. All skills listed and explained in the curricula are foundational to the next level- mastery of Level I concepts are necessary to learn Level II concepts, Level II concepts are necessary to learn Level III concepts, and so on. Without a proper foundation and progression, dancers will have gaps in their knowledge that can grow into frustrations, misunderstandings of proper technique, and potentially injuries.

**Other Expectations**

As dancers progress through the Pre-Professional Division at KDA, there are other expectations dancers are expected to fulfill. These are listed below, with general guidelines.

**Pointe Classes**

Pointe is a big milestone in a dancer’s life, and many dancers are eager to begin pointe as soon as possible. At KDA it is of the utmost importance that all our dancers are safe and secure at all stages of their dance development. Since pointe work has the potential to cause lifelong injuries, we as a studio take the step of beginning pointe very seriously. If the teacher has any doubts about a dancer’s strength, development, maturity, or ability, that dancer will not receive pointe shoes until any and all doubts are alleviated. The teachers and Academy Director will always keep an open line of communication with both parents and students about any concerns before, during, and after beginning pointe work.

Dancers are expected to receive their first pair of pointe shoes at Level III, and are expected to continue dancing en pointe from the end of Level III through Level VI. Dancers beginning classes at KDA at a higher level who have already received their pointe shoes may be asked to take time off pointe for further strengthening, take lower level pointe classes to build up stronger technique en pointe, or take private lessons to ensure proper technique en pointe. This is not a reflection of the dancers’ ability or performance, but an adherence to KDA’s strong belief in safety. All decisions regarding pointework will be communicated to parents and dancers by the instructor and/or Academy Director.

**Audition/Live Performance Requirements**

Auditioning is a huge part of dancers making the leap from recreational to pre-professional. Almost all college dance programs, outside performance opportunities, companies, and summer programs require auditions as part of their admittance policy. At KDA, our goal is to prepare each of our students for a future in the college or professional dance world, and practicing auditioning technique is almost as important as attending foundational technique classes.

Most auditions for summer programs and summer intensives begin at age 11, with a strong preference for experience en pointe. Summer programs and intensives usually take place between January and March, in a variety of locations near Frankfort, with a small audition fee (usually no more than $30). Summer programs and intensives often also require headshots, and photos of specific dance positions, and sometimes also require a resume.

At KDA, we **encourage all students** that meet the age requirements for summer programs and intensives to attend at least one audition each season, and **require all dancers in Levels IV-VI** to attend at least one audition each season. Though dancers are not required to attend any summer programs or intensives outside of KDA’s annual summer intensive and/or classes, it is of great value to meet and network with new dancers and instructors, and to have opportunities to go elsewhere.

Since auditioning requires preparation and some specialized knowledge, the Academy Director will be informing students and parents (of the proper age/level range) of all potential audition opportunities, as well as arranging dates for audition photos in the KDA studios. Since this is such an important facet of dance training, the Academy Director is also available for help with transportation, recommendations of summer programs and intensives specific to each student, and potential financial aid. There is also literature with more specific information and advice compiled by the Academy Director available digitally and physically in the studio- all parents and students are encouraged to read “Auditioning Dos and Don’ts “ in preparation for the audition season.

Another big part of dancers making the transition to pre-professional student is seeing live performances. **In lieu of meeting the audition requirement in levels IV-VI, dancers can instead attend a live dance performance and write a critical review of the performance to be given to Miss Amanda.**

**Summer Classes and Intensives**

As dancers reach a higher level of pre-professional training, it is imperative that they continue some form of training year round (allowing, of course, necessary periods of rest and recovery).

The major opportunity for travel and intensive dance training is during the summer months. Since there is generally a break in school, as well as a break in other activities, this is the opportune time for dancers to meet new instructors, dance more than their usual schedule allows, and expand their knowledge and ability with minimal distractions.

Dancers who have received their pointe shoes (Levels III-VI) are **required** to dance during the summer. This is specifically for safety reasons- dancers must maintain strong and resilient feet and ankles to continue dancing en pointe**. Any dancer who does not dance during the summer will not be allowed to perform en pointe in “The Nutcracker”, and will be taken off pointe for some classes until their strength is restored to the instructor and/or Academy Director’s requirements.**

Dancers may meet these requirements in a variety of ways- they may attend a KDA’s annual summer intensive for at least one week, attend another summer intensive or program elsewhere for at least one week, take classes at KDA or another local school weekly or as close to weekly as possible, or take private lessons with the Academy Director or another instructor weekly or as close to weekly as possible.

**Private Lessons**

Some dancers may feel, at various points in their dance training, that they could benefit from private lessons in addition to their regular dance classes. This could be to make up frequent absences over a period of time, to catch up to a peer age group for a student with a nontraditional start, to address and work through an injury, or to master a complicated step, performance piece, or concept. Though dancers are **never** required to take private lessons, dancers and parents are free to request private lessons at any time.

To request and schedule private lessons with any instructor, parents and dancers must call or email the instructor to check for availability. Private lessons should be scheduled for times when at least on studio will be free- instructors should always check the bulletin board and regular schedules to ensure a free studio for the duration of a private lesson. Instructors set their own rates for private lessons- the range is usually between $30-$50/hour. Most private lessons are between thirty and ninety minutes in length, though this should be determined by the instructor and dancer on a case-by-case basis.

KDA will **never** charge instructors or students a rental fee for studio usage. Any free studio at any time may be used by an instructor for a private lesson.

**Covid Precautions 2022-2023 Dance Season**

*\***Mask Usage in KDA**

Masks are OPTIONAL for all dancers and family members ages, regardless of vaccination status.

All our studios have space for dancers in masks to step to the side/front/back, remove their mask to drink water and breathe freely, and return to the group safely. It is in NO ONE’S best interest to push dancers to the point of extreme fatigue or distress. Instructors encourage smart hydration, breathing, and exercise- always. There are wall-mounted hand sanitizers in all studios so dancers can adjust their mask and sanitize as needed.

There will be absolutely no mask shaming, discussion of mask usage, shaming of vaccination status, or debate of vaccine effectiveness. KDA is a safe place and has no room for bullying, shaming, ostracization, etc. Dancers can communicate any and all concerns to their instructors- we are here to work through this together!

**Covid Exposures in KDA**

Should a dancer or instructor after attending class(es) at KDA, the following steps should be taken by **families**:

* Notify Academy Director and any additional instructors of the exposure as soon as possible.
* Follow your medical provider’s advice for how and when to return to activities and school.

Should a dancer or instructor in a class test positive and expose other dancers, **KDA** will take the following steps:

* Upon notification from the positive dancer/instructor’s family, the Academy Director will reach out to exposed families in the affected classes. This will be both through email and phone call.
* Dancers/instructors who have been exposed are asked to follow the quarantine guidelines laid out as of August from the school systems- please test and monitor symptoms for a full 7 days before returning to the studio. *As always, though, follow the directions given to you by your healthcare provider.*

For most cases, instructors in quarantine will have a physical substitute called in for all unaffected classes. Fully quarantined classes and instructors will determine virtual options during their quarantine on a case-by-case basis.

**Makeup Class Options for Dancers in Quarantine**

There will be times over the dance season when dancers will need to quarantine due to positive tests or exposures to covid. During this time, dancers have the following options to make up the classes they may have missed:

* Dancers may choose to not make up the missed classes. This is a good option for dancers who have lots of schedule conflicts which would prevent them from attending makeup classes, do not retain information well or enjoy virtual classes, or do not have rehearsal obligations to fulfill.
* Dancers may wait until they are well and out of quarantine to attend an in-person makeup class (see above information, “Makeup Classes”). This is the best option for all dancers who do not retain information well or enjoy classes and do not have rehearsal obligations to fulfill.
* Dancers, **at the discretion of their instructors**, may request to join classes virtually. This is dependent upon the dance style (acro, for instance, is not a safe activity to practice at home without equipment or spotting), the home space (tap, for instance, may damage hardwood floors and all dance requires some amount of free space), as well as the ability of the instructor to provide a reliable virtual link to class. This is a good option for dancers with dependable internet access, physical space to dance, and for those who have rehearsal obligations they need to meet.