



# BALLETNOVA

## CENTER FOR DANCE

# PARENT HANDBOOK

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## **Welcome to BalletNova Center for Dance!**

Thank you for entrusting us with your child's dance education. Included in this handbook are information, policies and procedures that will introduce you and your student to our program and our studio community.

### **Mission Statement**

BALLETNOVA CENTER FOR DANCE'S mission is to provide a center of dance excellence in Northern Virginia, nurturing and training dancers of all ages, and to offer superb community performances.

### **Vision Statement**

BALLETNOVA CENTER FOR DANCE offers rigorous ballet training for aspiring professionals in a nurturing environment, as well as quality instruction for children and adults at all levels. The not-for-profit Center provides creative opportunities for professional choreographers and teachers. We strive to create a learning atmosphere based on mutual support, respect, and excellence. We build community and inspire public appreciation of dance as an art form through performance, education and outreach.

**BalletNova Center for Dance is a 501(c) (3) not for profit organization governed by a volunteer board of directors.**

Naomi Pizarro, *President*  
Brian Gradle, *Vice President*  
Shannon MacGregor, *Secretary, Treasurer*  
Ann-Marie Bolton, *Director*  
Jay Cohen, *Director*  
Jennifer Walcott, *Director*  
Suzie Smyth, *Director*

#### **Managing Directors:**

Laveen Naidu, *Artistic Director*  
Caroline Frankil Warren, *Executive Director*

**Acknowledgement, Authorization & Release:** BalletNova Center for Dance expects every adult student and parent or guardian of a minor student (the “responsible party”) **to read and agree to the policies prior to enrolling** (see enrollment form). Your signed enrollment form is verification and confirmation that you agree to BalletNova policies; that you understand that the nature of dance instruction sometimes requires physical correction of the alignment of the student’s body; that the responsible party realizes there is always a risk of accident or injury inherent in any physical activity, including a dance program, and, in the event of injury, authorizes BalletNova Center for Dance to obtain emergency treatment on such adult student’s or minor student’s behalf; and that you further release BalletNova Center for Dance, Inc., its officers, directors and employees from all liabilities for injuries or property loss or damage arising out of participation in BalletNova Center for Dance, Inc. programs.

**Tuition:** Payment can be in full or in installments – for details refer to the brochure. **Tuition is non-refundable.** BalletNova is a **501(c) 3 non-profit organization** and cannot provide refunds, as teacher contracts and studio assignments are based on registrations in advance of the school season. Please consider your class choice carefully. All tuition must be paid in full by the end of the student’s class term.

**Attendance:** We cannot stress enough that attendance to every class must be of the utmost priority. Consistency of training is important so as to ensure the student works to their fullest potential. Regular training is the cornerstone of good technical and artistic development. If a student misses class regularly, they risk losing a role in an upcoming performance, not being promoted, and may have to step down to a lower level class. Quite simply, we cannot train students if they are not here. Make-up classes are available for classes missed within the same semester.

**Absence:** Students that must miss class due to illness or other issues must notify BalletNova 12 hours prior to the class taking place, if possible.

**Communication:** Please check your email regularly as the majority of our communication is through electronic means. Please also read our Newsletter emails, as it contains pertinent information. If you would like to talk to a teacher or staff member, the best way is to send an email to [admin@BalletNova.org](mailto:admin@BalletNova.org) and your email will be forwarded to the appropriate person. We strive for 24-hour turnaround for email and phone responses but please bear in mind that our teachers are not at the Center full time.

**Back - to - Ballet Meetings:** Junior – Conservatory Division classes will have an information and orientation session towards the beginning of the school year, held on a specified date during one of the regularly scheduled class times. Parents and students get a chance to meet the Directors, teachers, and fellow students and parents, get questions answered, and hear about the education goals for the dancers.

**Meet the Teacher Meetings:** Enrichment Division classes will have an information and orientation session towards the beginning of the school year, held on a specified date at the end of one of the regularly scheduled class times. Parents and students get a chance to meet the teachers and fellow students and parents, get questions answered, and hear about the education goals for the dancers.

**BARRE Program: BalletNova Referral Rewards** – when you refer a new student to BNCD and they enroll, or get a class card, you are eligible for a tuition credit! See the website for details.

**Dress Code and Shoes:** In order to create a sense of order and discipline, each class has a specific uniform that the dancers are required to wear (see the brochure or website for details). Please make every effort to see that your child has the appropriate attire prior to the start of the semester. We also ask that leotard and tights be laundered after each class, and that parents remind students of the importance of personal hygiene.

*Junior, Senior and Conservatory Division who are consistently out of uniform will be asked to sit out of class.* Please make sure that your dancer has the proper fitting shoes for whatever class they take (check the brochure or website for details). It is important to monitor young children’s shoes, as they grow quickly and you need to make sure the shoes fit properly, yet snugly.

**Social Media.** Please “like” BalletNova on Facebook, Twitter, and Instagram to get timely news, special promotions and pictures, and follow us on twitter!

**Financial Aid:** A limited amount of financial aid is available to families who demonstrate need. It is part of BalletNova’s mission to provide quality dance education to all who truly want to study. To request aid, fill out a Financial Aid form and submit with your most recently filed 1040 tax form, to the front desk. Aid recipients (student and/or parents) are asked to volunteer a minimum number of hours per year. Students must show consistent dedication to their training, have excellent attendance and be ambassadors for BalletNova in their communities.

**Hallway Etiquette:** Everyone is expected to walk in the hallways and be respectful of other people. Please keep noise to a minimum (phone calls, siblings etc) so as not to disturb classes and office work.

**Injury and Sickness:** Should an injury or serious illness occur that prevents the student from participating in classes, please **notify BalletNova immediately** preferably by email. After receiving a detailed doctor’s note describing the length of time away from class completely, and the rehab (if injured) schedule, then a medical credit can be issued for days/weeks missed. Students should always communicate directly with their instructor if an injury is preventing them from working full out. Parents may also send in a note with the student.

**In-Studio Showcase Performance (June):** Youth and Teen Division Students who enroll for both the Fall and Winter/Spring semesters and who have good attendance will be eligible to participate in the Showcase production in our studio performance space. Students receive detailed information at the end of the fall semester.

**June Student Performance (June):** All Junior through Conservatory Division students with good attendance will be eligible to perform in the June Student Performance. This performance takes place at a local theater; dancers receive detailed rehearsal and performance schedule information in the spring.

**Mid Year Evaluations:** Ballet I through Conservatory students receive a written evaluation at the end of the Winter Semester. Creative Movement, Pre Ballet, Youth and Teen Enrichment Division students do not receive a written evaluation; however, if the Instructor has concerns regarding a student’s progress in these divisions they will contact the parents directly. Parents and/students that have any questions or concerns about the progress of the student at any time of the year are urged to contact Associate Artistic Director, Constance Walsh ([cwalsh@BalletNova.org](mailto:cwalsh@BalletNova.org)).

**Observation Opportunities for Parents:** Parents are invited to observe classes half way through the year (December and January for all divisions – June for students not involved in performances.) A detailed schedule of observation dates will be provided closer to the actual dates.

**Nutrition:** Dancers need to fuel their bodies with a healthy, balanced diet (high in lean proteins, vegetables and complex carbohydrates). Overall health is crucial to effective training. Please make sure younger students have a nutritious snack (think raisins/yogurt/granola not candy bars) prior to class if they are coming directly from school. Healthy snacks are available in the vending machine near the party room. The dressing room is not a place to eat – if dancers come to the Center with food, it must be consumed in the community room. Dancers may bring a water bottle into the studio – sports drinks are not allowed and are not recommended.

**Outreach Performances.** There are outreach performances and appearances that student dancers may do, at the invitation of the Directors. Examples: Barnes & Noble Storytimes; Fall for Fairfax; Falls Church Memorial Day Parade; Let’s Move Arts Festival at Kenmore, Goodwin House.

**Performance Opportunities:** Junior through Conservatory Division students are eligible to audition for BalletNova’s annual performance of *The Nutcracker*. Senior and Conservatory Division students are eligible to audition for BalletNova’s spring performance which is a mixed repertory company-level production. On occasion there are opportunities for younger dancers to audition for the Spring production, and perform at outreach events.

**Placement Letters:** The Artistic Director works closely with the teachers to determine the progress of each student. Placement letters will be emailed out in June with the recommended level for the upcoming school year. All students are urged to continue training during the summer semester in the variety of workshops and classes the Center has to offer. Summer is also a good time to try something new and broaden horizons. Summer training will help ensure students retain what was learnt and keep in shape for the new school year.

**Punctuality:** We realize that getting to class in the late afternoon in the Metro DC area is always a challenge, nevertheless--- it's important to get to the studio in time for class, **preferably 10-15 minutes before** the actual start time, to allow time for changing, bathroom visit and stretching. Please remind your child not to “hang out” in the dressing room – it is for changing only. They should go directly to the hallway out side of their studio to wait for the class to begin. If a student is more than 10 minutes late for class, they will not be allowed to participate – this is because, if they miss the warm-up at the start, they are in danger of injuring themselves. Latecomers disrupt the class. Students that are too late to participate will sit and watch and take notes.

**Student Classroom Etiquette:** From the moment class begins until it finishes, students are expected to listen closely to the teacher and not speak unless asked a question. Students are not to leave or interrupt any class in session. Should a student need to be excused, they must obtain permission from the teacher before leaving. Dancers will show respect and courtesy for all students, teachers and staff members. Disruptive and improper behavior will not be tolerated – neither will bullying, negative, derogatory comments, or overblown egos. At BalletNova Center for Dance, **we all support and encourage each other**. Please go over these rules with your student.

**Studio Etiquette for Parents and Visitors:** Please wait in the Community Room - do not wait in the hallways outside the studios. Parents and visitors are not allowed to go past the stop sign midway in the facility unless specifically invited or if there is a special parent observation class. Arrangements can be made for visiting family members to observe – please contact the front desk to make a request. It is understood that parents will not communicate or distract children while in class - please stay away from the glass doorways.

Seating is provided for Creative Movement parents at the end of the front hallways before the stop sign - so they can be close in case their child needs to visit the restroom during class. If there is an emergency and a student needs to be pulled from the class, the parent/guardian must go to the front desk and ask a staff member to assist them.

**Use of Dressing Rooms:** Junior, Senior Division, Youth, Teen and Young Children dancers may use the girl's dressing room near the Community Room. Conservatory Division dancers may use the Adult Women's dressing room. **There is to be absolutely no food stored or eaten in the dressing rooms.** Dancers are expected to use cubbies, baskets and coat hooks to keep the room neat and tidy. Students must remember to take all belongings home with them when leaving after class. Students should not bring valuables with them to the Center. (We cannot be held responsible for lost, stolen or missing personal items). If this is unavoidable then a small bag (for a powered down computer/phone etc) maybe be brought into the classroom. Students should also bring their pointe/character shoes with them to the classroom. The dressing rooms are for changing only; they are not waiting or social gathering rooms. Students should proceed to the hallway outside their studio to stretch and warm up prior to their class start time. Disruptive and improper behavior will not be tolerated. Please go over these rules with your student.

**We need your help!** Parent volunteers are the lifeblood of our organization, and it's very important that everyone help out in whatever way they can.

### **Be a DO-ER, a DONOR, or a DOOR-OPENER!**

- ◆ **'Do-er'** – Sign up to be on a committee – help backstage – sew costumes – be a classroom parent – get program ads – plan a special event
- ◆ **'Donor'** – Financial support is crucial to the continued growth and viability of the organization. Contributions to BalletNova are fully tax deductible.
- ◆ **'Door-opener'** - Who do you know? Any corporate contacts who might be interested in being performance or program sponsors? Local politicians? Community leaders looking for arts partnerships? School or outreach contacts? Your neighborhood newsletter? Well-to-do patrons of the arts looking for an organization to become involved with? An online Moms/Parent group? Your local PTA or private school, which may let you put out flyers? Connect BalletNova with your community!

**Any questions?** Don't hesitate to contact us.

Laveen Naidu, *Artistic Director* - [lnaidu@BalletNova.org](mailto:lnaidu@BalletNova.org)

Caroline Frankil Warren, *Executive Director*, -[cwarren@BalletNova.org](mailto:cwarren@BalletNova.org)

Karinn Cologne, *Director of Programs and Operations* – [kcologne@BalletNova.org](mailto:kcologne@BalletNova.org)

Constance Walsh, *Associate Artistic Director* – [cwalsh@BalletNova.org](mailto:cwalsh@BalletNova.org)

Deko Ruch, *Front Desk and Registration Manager* – [hruch@BalletNova.org](mailto:hruch@BalletNova.org)

Kacie Peterson, *Program Coordinator* – [kpeterson@BalletNova.org](mailto:kpeterson@BalletNova.org)

*Thank you for understanding and abiding by these policies and rules,  
created to maintain a safe, encouraging, and enjoyable learning environment  
for all of our dancers!*