

Alabama Ballet
School
Parent / Student
Handbook

Alabama Ballet School

Mission Statement

Alabama Ballet School provides exceptional ballet training in a nurturing and inclusive environment. Our mission is to inspire and educate students of all ages and backgrounds, fostering a love and appreciation for the art of ballet. Through our commitment to excellence in teaching and performance, we aim to develop dancers who are not only technically proficient but also artistically expressive and passionate about their craft. We believe in the transformative power of dance and strive to instill confidence, discipline, and a lifelong appreciation for the arts in each of our students.

Attendance

All classes and rehearsals are mandatory. Excused absences are limited to family emergency, pre-planned family trip, required-for-grade school activity (this is limited to field trips. All other school activities - dance team, track, cheer, band, theater, etc. will fall under extra-curricular and will not be considered excused or eligible for make-up), injury and illness. Both injury and illness will require a doctor's note to be considered excused. Injured students in Intermediate 1 - Advanced levels are required to observe class and take notes. It's extremely important not to miss class. Regular and consistent attendance is important not only for your student's progression but also to prevent injuries. For this reason, prompt arrival to class or rehearsal is imperative. Each student should arrive in time to properly warm up and focus before class or rehearsal begins. Students arriving more than ten minutes late will not be permitted to participate in class. Two late arrivals will equal one absence. The same applies to leaving class or rehearsal early. In the event of a late arrival for an emergency, traffic, etc. please call our school office so we may keep our teachers informed. Full attendance in each class and rehearsal will ensure the proper mechanics are worked through to perform with confidence and without injury. Students will only be allowed three (3) excused absences per semester. If a student incurs more than three (3) absences during a semester, they will not be eligible to participate in any Alabama Ballet professional company or school performance that semester regardless of casting or time prior to production. Absences accrued during the fall semester and until March 1st of the second semester, are eligible to be made up. Taking a make-up class will result in absence not counted against the student. Make-up classes can be taken the week prior to absence or the week directly following absence. Make-up class selections and absence requests (if seeking the absences to be excused) must be emailed to nataliehunt@alabamaballet.org

Any Creative Movement – Level 1 student may attend the same level class on a different day of the week.

Level 2 students may attend the Level 1 class on Mondays.

Level 3 students may attend Level 3 optional class on Tuesday or Level 2 on Thursdays.

Level 4 students may attend Level 3 on Wednesdays.

Level 5 students may attend Level 4 Tuesdays.

Intermediate 1 students may attend Intermediate 1/2 on Thursday or Saturday the 1st semester and Intermediate 1/2 Saturday the 2nd semester.

Intermediate 2 students may attend Intermediate 1/2 Saturday the 1st semester and Level 5 Thursdays the 2nd semester.

Advanced students may any level class as a makeup class (including the Day Program technique class) as long as it does not conflict with regularly scheduled classes.

Due to our spring performance, there will be no make-up opportunities after March 1, 2025.

Teachers reserve the right to determine a student's involvement in their Spring Performance choreography based on absences and participation in class.

We have created recreational classes for Intermediate-Advanced levels meeting 2/3 times weekly for those wanting to pursue other activities with conflicting schedules. Students attending recreational classes will only be eligible for the Spring Performance if committed to attending two classes per week. Other than The Nutcracker, students in the recreational classes will not be eligible to perform in professional company productions.

Inclement Weather and School Closures

The Alabama Ballet School follows Birmingham City Schools for inclement weather closings. In the event of a weather closing, you will be notified by email. However, following us on Facebook and Instagram will also keep you informed with up to the minute closing/cancellation information.

Scheduled School closings

Labor Day-Monday, September 2

Fall Break – Saturday, October 12 (Intermediate-Advanced only) Creative Movement and Pre-Primary Saturday classes will still meet.

Halloween - Thursday, October 31 (Creative Movement-Level 5 only) Intermediate 1-Advanced levels will meet.

Thanksgiving-Wednesday, November 27 through Tuesday, December 3

Christmas - Monday, December 9 through Saturday, January 4

Spring Break- Monday, March 24 through Saturday, March 29

Other important dates for this season

Fall semester begins – August 12th

Nutcracker Auditions - August 24th

Peter Pan Auditions - January 5th (Levels 2 and 3 will be eligible to audition for Baby crocs and Jane. Intermediate 1 students under 5'3 will be eligible to audition for Butterflies)

Spring semester begins - January 6th

Alabama Dance Festival January 24-26th (6th grade students and above are invited to participate in classes)

Summer Intensive Auditions January 19th (Level 5 – Advanced)

Parents Observation Week - February 3-8

Level 1-3 exit exams - April 7-10th

Lower School Rehearsals for Spring Performance - April 11, 18 and 26th (Level 1-5)

Upper School Rehearsals for Spring Performance - April 12, 19 and 26th (Intermediate 1-Advanced and Curated)

Spring Performance Dress Rehearsal - May 2nd

Last day of classes - May 3rd

Spring Performance (Level 1-Advanced) May 3rd

Level 4-Advanced exit exams May 5-8

Reports of Progress (Creative Movement-Primary levels) May 10th

Parents Observation

There will be an opportunity to observe your student's class during the second semester. Parents Observation Week is February 3-8, 2025. If your child has class multiple times per week, their observation day is scheduled below. When observing, we ask that you do not bring younger siblings and keep walking in/out of doors to a minimum. Parents Observation schedule for Level 2-Advanced (as they meet multiple times per week):

Level 2 - Tuesday, February 4th 4:00-6:15 pm (this includes jazz if applicable)

Level 3 – Wednesday, February 5th 4:00-5:30pm

Level 4 – Monday, February 3rd 4:00-6:30pm (this includes jazz)

Level 5 – Monday, February 3rd 4:00-6:30pm (this includes jazz)

Intermediate 1 – Monday, February 3rd 4:45-8:00pm (this includes conditioning and pointe)

Intermediate 2 – Monday, February 3rd 4:45-8:00pm (this includes conditioning and pointe)

Advanced – Tuesday, February 4th 4:30-8:00pm (this includes pointe and variations)

Curated – Wednesday, February 5th 6:00-7:15pm

Spring Performance

Our Spring Performance for Levels 1-Advanced will be held at BJCC Theater at 2:00pm on Saturday, May 3, 2025. Dress Rehearsal will be held 4:00-8:00pm on Friday, May 2, 2025. Mandatory Rehearsals for Levels 1-5 will be held on Fridays, April 11th and 18th, and Saturday, April 26th. Mandatory Rehearsals for Intermediate 1-Advanced will be held on Saturdays April 12th, 19th, and 26th. Rehearsal time will be determined at a later date. **All rehearsals for the spring performance are mandatory. There will be no excused absences during the rehearsal period. If a student is unable to attend all four mandatory rehearsals in full, they will not be permitted to perform.** There will be a non-refundable \$150 production fee for all students involved in the Spring Performance as well as a \$150 costume fee for all Intermediate 1-Advanced and Curated students due by February 2025. In January, we will launch our BANDApp page for the 2025 Spring Performance. Each parent will need to download the app and accept our page invite. All communication regarding the Spring Performance will be found within the app.

Reports of Progress

Reports of Progress for Creative Movement -Primary will be held at the Alabama Ballet Center for Dance on Saturday, May 10th. Each class will have their own presentation in our main studio for parents and family friends. Performance times will be determined at a later date.

Tuition

Tuition will be paid through HiSawyer.com. As you register for classes through our website, you will be taken to HiSawyer.com where you will register for class, enter your information, and choose a payment plan. Payments can be made per year, per semester, or in eight monthly installments due on the 15th of each month. Tuition is not charged in the months of December or May.

Dress Code

Leotards (female): Each class has a designated uniform color (see below). Your dancer may wear any brand of their designated leotard color, however we ask that every dancer own at least one of our uniform brand leotards so that when the time comes for exams, reports of progress, presentations, and spring performance the entire class matches. Our uniform leotards are as follows:

All levels wear Energetiks brand, Annabelle style. Applause Dancewear in Homewood has our uniform leotards, socks and shoes in stock.

Creative Movement with Tap or Ballet - white leotard, pink socks and pink ballet slippers

Pre-Primary- pink leotard, pinks socks and pink ballet slippers

Primary- baby blue leotard, pink socks and pink ballet slippers

Level 1 - dusty rose leotard, pink or flesh tone tights with matching ballet slippers

Level 2- jacaranda leotard, pink or flesh tone tights with matching ballet slippers

Level 3- burgundy leotard, pink or flesh tone tights with matching ballet slippers

Level 4- hunter green leotard, pink or flesh tone tights with matching ballet slippers

Level 5- red leotard, pink or flesh tone tights with matching ballet slippers

Intermediate 1 - navy leotard, pink or flesh tone tights with matching ballet slippers and pointe shoes

Intermediate 2- mulberry leotard, pink or flesh tone tights with matching ballet slippers and pointes shoes

Advanced - black leotard, pink or flesh tone tights with matching ballet slippers and pointe shoes

Tights note: Level 1 and up wear pink or flesh-toned tights. The color of your ballet tights must match the color of your ballet slippers and pointe shoes. Do not wear pink tights with flesh toned shoes or vice versa. If wearing pointe shoes, elastics/ribbons should also match. Tights should be clean and neat without holes.

Pointe Shoe note: All elastics and ribbons should be trimmed and sewn. No elastics or ribbons should be frayed, or safety pinned. All ribbons should be neatly tied and tucked in.

Jazz- uniform color leotard, black jazz pants or shorts with black jazz shoes

Stretch - class uniform should be worn; ballet warmups may be worn at the teacher's discretion. All students in stretch classes will need a yoga mat.

Male Dancers: fitted white t-shirt or leotard, black tights held in place by a belt rolled with the tights at the waist, dance belt and black ballet slippers.

Students in Creative Movement through Level 4 may choose to wear black bike or athletic shorts in lieu of tights, with white or black socks and matching ballet slippers.

Hair should be neatly secured away from face and neck. A ballet bun or equivalent (braided crown, French twist, etc.) is preferred for all levels but not required until Level 1. Unsecured hair can be a distraction and potentially dangerous.

Other than small stud earrings, no jewelry is permitted in class. Smartwatches, watches, bracelets, anklets, necklaces, tattoos and body art are not permitted in class.

Class Placement and Advancement

Alabama Ballet reserves the right to determine level placement for each student. New students aged eight and above who did not train at Alabama Ballet the previous year will be required to take a placement class. Our faculty will determine a student's placement in a class appropriate for their abilities. Current students will advance to the next level at the discretion of the artistic staff and only once they have met the criteria of their current level. A faculty assessment/exit exam will take place at the end of each spring term to determine the student's fall term placement. Under the new school structure, advancement occurs on an individual basis and students may be placed in the same level for two or more consecutive years before they advance.

Level 1 - 2 will be examined by the Director of Curriculum, Isabella Cowles

Level 3 will be examined by Ms. Cowles and another faculty member

Level 4- Intermediate 2 will be examined by a panel of five faculty members including the Artistic Director Christopher Stuart and Director of Curriculum, Isabella Cowles.

Exit criteria and specific class/level expectations will be given to parents during the student's first class period of the school year. We will strive to make placement transparent. In the event our directors or faculty members see an issue, we will make every effort to communicate with the parents. It's important to remember that every body is different in regards to growth. A student must demonstrate physical strength along with proper alignment in order to perform the more difficult steps free of injury.

Before beginning pointe work, each student in Level 4-5 will be required to participate in a pre-pointe strengthening class. At the end of the class, students will be evaluated by our professional company's physical therapist before pointe work is permitted.

Arrival and Pick-up

Students should arrive and depart promptly. If possible, students should arrive 10-15 minutes early to prepare for class or rehearsal. Students arriving more than ten minutes late to class will not be permitted to participate (this is a precaution for the physical safety of the dancer). The dancer should remain and observe class to be marked as present.

Please do not park in the roundabout. If your dancer is not yet out of class, please park in a parking space to wait. This is a safety matter. With multiple classes and/or rehearsals releasing at the same time, stopping in the roundabout can cause traffic to back up into the street on 1st Avenue South.

Our lobby is open to parents for drop off and pick up. Creative Movement – Level 3 classes will wait as a class at a designated place in the hallway where their teacher will meet them. During classes, our hallways are off limits to those that are not students or employees. Because Alabama Ballet School shares a building with the professional company, where important business activities are ongoing, we kindly ask parents and students to maintain a quiet atmosphere in the lobby and hallways.

All students should remain inside the building until their parent or guardian has arrived. Students are not permitted to wait outside without supervision for any reason.

Studio and Classroom Etiquette

We encourage students to come already dressed for dance class. However, if they must change into their uniform at the studio, they may use the lobby bathrooms. All company and teacher dressing rooms are off limits to students and parents.

Our kitchen/break room is closed to students and parents. In the event your student needs assistance with a snack/meal, our evening receptionist will be happy to help.

Due to students and staff members with life threatening allergies - no nut products may be consumed in our facility.

Water is the only beverage permitted inside our studios. Food will only be permitted in the hallway.

Students are expected to keep the studios clean. All trash is to be thrown away. No trash should be left behind in the hallways or studios.

Students in Level 4 - Advanced are permitted to stretch inside the studio. At no time should any student in Creative Movement - Level 3 be in a studio without adult supervision.

All student's belongings should be taken into the classroom with them and placed neatly in cubie or designated floor area. No dance bags or belongings should be left in the lobby or hallway way while students attend class.

All belongings should be labeled.

There will be a Lost & Found inside the School Office. If your student has misplaced something, please check periodically as anything unclaimed at the end of each semester will be donated.

Ballet slippers and pointe shoes should not be worn outside the studio. Oil and dirt are hazardous and damaging to our floors and your students' shoes.

Cell phones should remain silent and in student's dance bags. At no time should a cell phone be answered or used during class. In the event of an emergency, please call our office. Parents should keep phones silent while in the lobby. If you must take a call while dropping off or picking up, please step outside the studio.

Students should go to the bathroom before class.

No chewing gum in studios.

No hanging on the barres in the studio.

No talking during class.

No running or yelling in hallway or studios.

No sitting down or sitting out of class without teacher's permission.

Alabama Ballet School is a "Bully Free Zone." No disrespectful comments or gestures to teachers or fellow classmates and no physical fighting of any kind will be tolerated.

Students under the age of 18 are not permitted to follow/friend request or contact faculty members or company dancers on social media, through email or text messaging.

Parents should refrain from contacting faculty members through personal cell numbers.

Should your student be taking private lessons with a faculty member, communicating personally is a necessary exception. In the event there is a classroom issue, or for all other inquiries please email nataliehunt@alabamaballet.org.