



Guardian/Student Handbook

825 Hope Street Providence, Rhode Island 02906

401.353.1129 www.balletri.org

school@balletri.org

Welcome to the School of Ballet RI

Our Philosophy

The School of Ballet RI offers a community where students can focus on dancing in an environment that is joyful, supportive, and full of integrity without compromise. We have moved beyond older methods that are fear-based and product driven. We have learned that positive student-centered teaching is a more sustainable approach. As educators, we aim to provide an exceptional dance education in a variety of styles by emphasizing the joy and satisfaction that it brings our students.

The School of Ballet RI is comprised of a world class faculty of professional teachers providing the highest standard of dance instruction. Each teacher has completed many years of educational training, degrees in Dance Pedagogy or significant performance experience. Our teachers are current and former international performers and engage in continued education throughout the year thus they provide the most relevant education in dance today. Art is constantly evolving, and our approach to dance education remains open to ensure our students receive the most up to date education in the field.

Our Curriculum

As a classical ballet school, Ballet RI offers its students a comprehensive dance education. We have designed a syllabus that meets the needs of those students striving for a professional level of dancing, while providing class options that support excellence in various dance forms, and dance for pure enjoyment. Whatever a student desires from their dance education, our curriculum fosters a strong technical foundation and a high level of discipline and commitment. Students who graduate from our school receive a comprehensive understanding of the art of ballet, a strong technical base in multiple forms of dance, a culturally diverse dance experience and tools for success and wellbeing in all they do in life.

Our students begin their early training in the Children's Program. This program has been created to magnify students' imagination and explore their moving bodies. As students move through the school, they will be afforded the opportunity to progress into the Core Ballet Program or to continue their studies in our Beginner Program, depending on their desired level of commitment. Our curriculum includes classes in several dance disciplines to support the training of a well-rounded dancer.

As the course of study concludes, talented students selected from the Upper Core Levels are given the opportunity to audition for acceptance into the Pre-Professional and Trainee Programs. These programs offer a bridge between the School and Ballet RI's professional company.

Students are accepted as Pre-Professionals at the discretion of the Director of the Company and the Directors of the School. Students accepted into the Pre-Professional Level continue to train full-time in our Core Program, while taking additional Trainee class twice a week, with additional opportunities for professional development and participation.

Trainees are required to take a limited number of classes in the school while engaging fully in the company schedule. Trainees work extensively in our outreach program and are afforded many performance opportunities with our Company. After two years, Trainees may move on to become company members at BRI or are hired by other professional.

Students are given multiple performance opportunities throughout the year including Culmination, Next Generation Choreographic Project for Core students, Performance Ensemble by invitation by the directors and our audition-based children's cast of The Nutcracker.

Our students are inspired by the opportunity to work side by side with the professional company both in the studio, as well as on the stage during many company productions; including The Nutcracker and other ballet classics.

General Policies

We wish to provide a welcoming environment and safe learning space for all. Please reach out to the Director if you have any questions or concerns regarding any of our policies.

Payment

All school registration and trimester tuition payments are due one week prior to the start of each session, unless an alternate payment plan has been established. **All late tuition payments will incur a late fee of 5% of the session's tuition.** See our registration information for payment methods and payment plans.

Class Change

All class changes must be made within the first week of each session and must be submitted to the front desk on an Add/Drop form.

Refund/Withdraw Policy

If a student withdraws within the first week of the session, 75% of the session tuition will be refunded. Withdrawals in the second week will receive a 50% refund. No refunds or credits will be issued for withdrawals that occur after the second week of the session. Registration fees are non-refundable. A Refund/Credit form must be completed and returned to the registrar within one week of withdrawal. Any refunds will take 4-6 weeks (from the time of submission) to process.

Paperwork/Emails

Most correspondence is now done via email. **Please make sure we have your correct email address to ensure a smooth process.** School information can also be found on our website at www.balletri.org. All paperwork must be completed and returned before the student attends any classes.

Missed Classes and Make Up Classes

All students are required to call the front desk to report an absence. We ask that students not attend class if they are sick. If a student must miss a class, we recommend the student attend the same level or lower-level class within the same quarter. For those participating in Culmination, 2nd session attendance policy allows each student to miss one more class per week than they are registered for or they may not be allowed to perform in Culmination. For instance, if a student has class three times per week they are allowed four unexcused absences during the 2nd session. We know that dancers need to be present to be prepared for performing opportunities. If there are too many absences whether excused or unexcused, the director holds the right to determine whether or not the student can participate in the performance.

Observation

Visitors are only allowed in studios during scheduled observation days, which will be held at the end of the first and second session.

Bathroom

Guardians of children age 4 and under are asked to remain in the lobby during your child's class or provide a cell phone number so they can be called to return for bathroom breaks. Children age 4 and under must be accompanied by a guardian when going to the bathroom. Front desk staff members are not allowed to take children to the bathroom, or clean up after them. If your child has specific needs, please contact the Registrar.

Lobby

All students and visitors are asked to be respectful of the administrative staff and studio classes by keeping noise to a minimum.

Class Locations

- Please note that this year Ballet RI will have classes at One (1) location.
 - **Ballet RI Studios – 825 Hope Street**
- All Ballet RI business must be conducted at the Ballet RI Studios.

Class Cancellations

If classes are cancelled due to inclement weather, we will post announcements on local television stations 6, 10 and 12 as well as local radio stations. An announcement will be on our phone and website. We send emails and post on our Facebook and Instagram pages when possible.

Volunteering

We love our family and community volunteers! If you would like to help out with our many ongoing projects and join our Ballet RI Volunteer Organization (Friends of Ballet RI), please give your information to the front desk. All volunteer hours must be kept by the individual. Ballet RI is not responsible for logging volunteer hours.

Gifts to Faculty and Staff

Staff and faculty at Ballet RI School are encouraged not to accept gifts from individual students or their parents. While the School appreciates the spirit behind individual gifts, families are asked to comply with this policy. Faculty will not be permitted to give individual gifts to students.

Families who wish to show their appreciation to staff are encouraged to make a donation in their teacher's name to the Ballet RI Annual Fund Appeal, which supports our entire organization. The teacher's name will appear in our annual playbill.

Student Policies

Arrival and Departure

Students must enter through the lobby, not through the 4th Street entrance, and wait in the lobby until their teacher collects them. Students will exit through their designated exit and those under 12 will only be released to a guardian. Late pick up is at the front lobby after 5 minutes.

Facilities

Students should respect the studios, dressing rooms, hallways, and bathrooms by removing all water bottles, clothes, bandage wrappers, shoes, etc. when leaving. All equipment and learning materials must be put back in their proper storage place once a student has finished using them. Because of the facility's open environment, keeping noise to a minimum is essential to create the best learning and working environment. This is a shared space and we should all take care of our dancing environment. Please report any damaged Ballet RI property immediately to a staff member.

Personal Property

Students are expected to be respectful of other people's personal property. Do not bring valuables to the studio. Ballet RI is not responsible for any lost or stolen property.

Cell Phones

Students are not allowed to use their cell phones during classes or rehearsals unless granted permission by the teacher. Cell phone use should be limited to common areas.

Private Lessons

Private Lessons are offered for dancers who wish for one-on-one work with a Ballet RI faculty member. Privates are held in 30 or 60 minute sessions and the fee is determined by the faculty member. The faculty member is responsible for paying the \$25/hour studio rental fee. All privates should be paid in cash. Guardians are required to sit in on at least the first lesson or at the request of the faculty member. Privates are not to be used in lieu of regularly scheduled classes but to supplement dancer training when needed. Privates are subject to studio space availability and cannot be guaranteed on a regular basis.

Part-time Core Enrollment

Ballet RI's Core Program is designed for full-time enrollment. If a student desires to attend a partial class load, they must receive permission from the School Principal each year that the request is desired. The Principal reserves the right to determine whether or not the request will be granted based on reasonable expectations for professional dance training that may include a minimal number of classes per week and/or a level change to accommodate a modified schedule.

Drugs, Alcohol and Tobacco

The use of drugs, alcohol, and tobacco is strictly prohibited on site and will result in immediate termination from the program. Tuition will not be refunded.

Anti-Discrimination Policy

Ballet RI is committed to providing an environment free from discrimination for all students, staff members, and applicants for employment. If a student feels that they have been a victim of discrimination, they should bring it to the attention of the School Principal or Director. If a student participates in discrimination, a phone call to guardians and possible classroom discussion will take place for a first offense; a meeting with the guardian, student and director will take place for a second offense; and a third offense will be reason for dismissal.

Harassment

Ballet RI is committed to building a positive environment throughout its operations. Ballet RI will not tolerate any form of harassment of its students or employees. If any student feels they are the victim of harassment, they should bring this to the attention of School Principal and/or the Director. If a student engages in harassment of another student or teacher, a phone call to guardians and possible classroom discussion will take place for a first offense; a meeting with the guardian, student and principal will take place for a second offense; and a third offense will be reason for dismissal. If a guardian engages in harassment of a student or teacher, a meeting with the guardian and principal will take place; for a second offense, opportunities such as volunteering, use of lobby etc. may be suspended; and a third offense will be reason for dismissal. In the occasion that the harassment was deemed severe, additional meetings may take place with the appropriate authorities.

Mental Health and Emotional Support

Students who are experiencing discomfort, anxiety, or need to leave their studio to find a safe place must report to one of the directors' offices or the front desk for support. They may take leave in a bathroom for fifteen minutes but if they require a break longer than fifteen minutes, they must report to one of the safe places. The student's guardian will be consulted if faculty or staff feel they need additional mental and emotional support. If a student is away for an extended period of time due to mental health issues, a doctor's note will need to be provided.

Eating Disorder Policy

For the health and safety of our students, Ballet RI has a zero-tolerance eating disorder policy. If symptoms of an eating disorder are observed, the faculty will first reach out to the student and then the parent or guardian will be consulted. Should a student be diagnosed with an eating disorder, they will not be allowed to perform until a physician has been consulted. Participation in classes will be at the discretion of the director in consultation with the guardian and the student's physician.

Evacuation Emergencies

In the case of an evacuation of the School of Ballet RI studios, students and families will be reunited at the Rochambeau Library at 708 Hope Street.

Student Discount for Ballet RI Providence performances

Experiencing live professional dance is an important component of a well-rounded arts education. We are pleased to offer our students and their families a 10% discount off selected seating areas for select BALLET RI performances at The Vets and Woodman Center. Discount information can be found below:

The Vets

Code: BALLETRISCHOOL

Call 401-421-ARTS or go to TheVetsRI.com

Woodman Center

Code: BALLETRISCHOOL

Call 401-353-1129 or use online at balletri.org

(Valid for actively enrolled BALLET RI School students and families, limit 4 tickets per household, selected performances and seating areas. \$4 Vets facility fee cannot be discounted)

Dance Classroom Culture

The culture that we create in the classroom demands that all participants recognize that they have something to learn and something to give while they are in the dance space. Important boundaries are set up to protect our learning environment and the people in it. These expectations are important for all to follow because they create an atmosphere in which learning and respect for self and others are of the utmost importance.

Punctuality

It is very important to **be on time**. Dance class starts with warming-up the body and if the student is late, they will have missed vital exercises and possible important announcements from their teacher. If the student is late, they should stand quietly at the entrance of the studio until the teacher will allow the student to join at the next combination. It is the teacher's discretion whether a student will participate or be asked to observe.

Talking During Class

All conversations in dance class are led by the teacher. Therefore, whether the student is a child starting out, or a student in Upper Level 2, there is **no talking** until the teacher opens up the conversation. Class is a time to concentrate on the learning done in a group setting and too much distracting conversation can take away from time spent moving and learning. Whispering is prohibited as it leads to an environment of mistrust.

Questions

Asking questions about classroom topics is welcomed and shows that you are engaged. If a student has a question, they should raise their hand and wait for the teacher – students should refrain from interrupting the teacher when they are in the middle of giving an instruction or feedback– unless it is an absolute emergency. Students should refrain from asking teachers personal questions unrelated to the content matter of the classroom.

Receiving Feedback

We are all in this together. We encourage students to take instruction and feedback with a positive mindset. Our teachers want to see their students thrive and improve. It is important for young dancers to understand that progress is made by applying the guidance given by the instructor. A major part of dance education is corrections. Corrections in class can sometimes feel like criticism but we prefer to think of them as suggestions for improvement. Remember that the teacher sees potential in the student and is asking the student to work towards that potential. If a student feels that they are being singled out or harassed by a teacher, the student should come to the School Director with their concerns.

Gum is not allowed during class or rehearsals.

Attire

Details are important. In ballet class, that includes ensuring that students come to class **wearing the correct dancewear/uniform**. Please mend ripped tights and leotards. Please make sure dancewear is clean. We suggest that if students have multiple classes each week, that they have more than one leotard in the class color. Students are only required to have one uniform leotard, but if students are in Level 4 and up, it is recommended that they have at least two leotards in the class color to alternate between washings. **Bracelets, watches, large rings, large jewelry on the neck or drop earrings are not allowed during classes or rehearsals**. Girls are allowed to wear black bike shorts over their leotard once a month without questions asked. If a teacher feels that policy is being taken advantage of, the director will be consulted, and a conversation will be had with the student. If you are not in proper uniform, you may not be able to participate in class. For more details, please see dress code requirements.

Hair

Hair must be pulled back and adequately secured. Hair can impact the dancer's ability to execute dance moves with correct technique. Dancers who do not have their hair pulled back appropriately run the risk of creating bad habits, like unknowingly flicking their head to get their bangs out of their eyes, or not spotting because their hair hits them in the face when turning. If you have questions, please ask your teacher before or after class. For more details, please see dress code requirements.

Classroom disturbances.

All students are expected to listen to their instructor and conduct themselves in an appropriate manner. A minor classroom disturbance such as excessive talking, rudeness, not listening or taking directions will result in a phone call to guardians and possible classroom discussion will take place for a first offense; a meeting with the guardian, student and parent will take place for a second offense; and a third offense will be reason for dismissal.

Classroom Breaks

Water breaks are a regular occurrence in ballet class granted by the teacher. Students dancing for more the 2.5 hours will be given time for a snack and bathroom break. All students are expected to go to the bathroom before class starts. If students have an emergency and must use the bathroom during class time, they must raise their hand to be excused and wait at the door upon reentry.

BALLET RI Dress Code and Hair Requirements

All Students are required to follow the dress code for their class and level. Approved leotard styles are listed on our uniform order form and are available at LaBrie Dance store. Leotards ordered through Ballet RI will be embroidered with BALLET RI logo. All dancers can self-select which gender uniform is appropriate for them.

Children's Program

Females:

Me & My Guardian and Creative Movement: Dress Code leotard**, white ankle socks, pink ballet shoes (white tutus are welcomed)

Pre-Ballet 1, 2 and 3: Dress Code leotard**, white ankle socks, pink ballet shoes

Males: White or level color short sleeve shirt, black bike shorts, white socks, white ballet shoes

Hair: Pulled back securely off face. If questions, please ask instructor.

Core Ballet Program

Females: All girls must wear pink or flesh colored tights to create a uniform line throughout the leg. Tights should be matte (not shiny or Lycra). Ballet slippers should align with the color of the tights.

Hair: Pulled back securely off face. If questions, please ask instructor.

Males: All male students must wear black tights with black shoes to create a uniform line throughout the leg.

Pointe Shoe Requirement (Primary 3 and above): Students are required to come to class with properly fitting and properly prepared shoes (i.e. ribbons and elastics must be sewn on and sufficiently broken-in). Students will not be allowed to dance on pointe if the teacher deems shoes a poor fit.

Females:

Primary 1: Dress Code leotard**, tights, ballet shoes*

Primary 2: Dress Code leotard**, tights, ballet shoes*

Primary 3: Dress Code leotard**, tights, ballet shoes*

Males: White or level color short-sleeve shirt, black bike shorts, white socks, white ballet shoes for Primary 1 and Primary 2.

White or level color short-sleeve shirt or leotard, black tights, black ballet shoes for Primary 3.

Females:

Upper 1: Dress Code leotard**, tights, ballet shoes*

Upper 2: Dress Code leotard**, tights, ballet shoes*

Males: White or level color short-sleeve shirt or leotard, black tights, black ballet shoes.

*Ballet shoes should align with the color of the tights

**Dress Code leotards can be found on our website and uniform order form

Enrichment classes:

Character Dance - Primary 3, Upper 1 and Upper 2

Female: Dress Code leotard**, black character skirt and black character shoes.

Hair: Pulled back securely off face. If questions, please ask instructor.

Male: White or color level fitted shirts, black tights, black character or jazz shoes

Contemporary – Upper 1 and Upper 2

Female: Any color leotard, black cotton or spandex fitted shorts or black footless tights, ballet shoes

Hair: Pulled back securely off face. If questions, please ask instructor.

Male: Any color fitted t-shirt, black cotton or spandex fitted shorts or black tights, black ballet shoes

Jazz – Primary 2, Primary 3, Upper 1 and Upper 2

Female: Any color leotard, black cotton or spandex fitted shorts or black footless tights and black jazz shoes

Hair: Pulled back securely off face. If questions, please ask instructor.

Male: Any color fitted t-shirt, black jazz pants and black jazz shoes

Open Program

Females:

Open Beginner Ballet: Dress Code leotard**, tights, ballet shoes*

Open Jazz: any color leotard, black jazz pants, black jazz shoes

Open Integrated Modern: any color leotard, black footless tights

Males:

Open Beginner Ballet: White short sleeve shirt, black bike shorts, white socks, white ballet shoes

Open Jazz: Any color short sleeve shirt, black bike shorts, white socks, white ballet shoes, black jazz shoes

Open Modern: Any color short sleeve shirt, black bike shorts, or leggings socks or bare feet

*Ballet shoes should align with the color of the tights

**Dress Code leotards can be found on our website and uniform order form

Open Adult Program

No dress code is required, however, comfortable fitted clothing such as yoga wear is suggested.

Our History

Originally conceived by the late Lydia Pettine, Ballet RI, formerly Festival Ballet of RI and then Festival Ballet Providence, was founded in 1978 by Christine Hennessey and Winthrop Corey, formerly principal dancers with The Royal Winnipeg Ballet and The National Ballet of Canada. Both worked tirelessly to develop and grow the young company, bringing in talented international choreographers to set their works, while also working with the local community to advance dance education and appreciation. Ms. Hennessey led the company artistically until her death in 1997.

Since Ms. Hennessey's passing, leadership of the Company was passed to Mr. Mihailo Djuric. After Mr. Djuric retired, Kathleen Breen Combes took over as Director of Festival Ballet Providence. The non-profit Festival Ballet Providence started its own school. In 2023, Festival Ballet Providence officially became Ballet RI. The School of BALLET RI currently boasts a distinguished international faculty, an outstanding Children's Program, the Core Program for the dedicated ballet student, Pre-Professional Program for students who show potential for a career in the industry, and the Trainee Program for the semi-professional dancer. Students have the opportunity to participate in company productions as well as numerous performance opportunities during the school year. The school also offers an exemplary Adaptive Program (designed to bring movement and expression into the lives of children with Intellectual and Developmental Disorders), engaging Summer programs and camps, and lastly, an Open Program that provides the community access to this art form through a variety of classes and workshops. These comprehensive educational programs are offered year-round. Since its inception in 1999, the School of Ballet RI has continued to grow and expand its offerings to provide dance experiences for students of all ages.

At BALLET RI, students grow as individuals, learn the joy of movement through dance, and train pre-professionally in a serious and nurturing environment. The close association with the Professional Company provides opportunities for talented dance students to emulate experienced professionals and to appear on stage with company dancers in major productions.

I attest that I have read the Ballet RI Student/Guardian handbook and will abide by all policies. Please return this page to the Registrar with your registration materials.

Student signature

date

Guardian signature

date