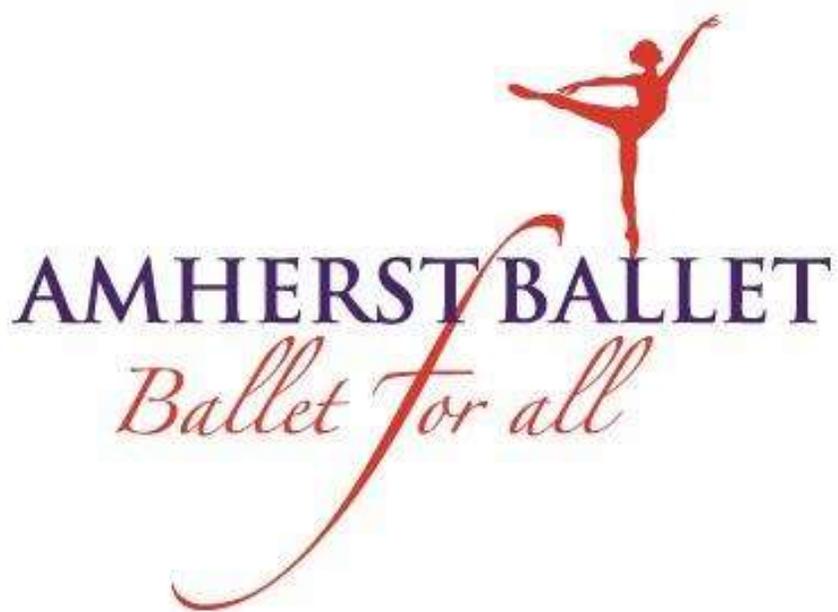


# **The Amherst Ballet Theatre Company**

**2021 - 2022**

## **Parent & Dancer Handbook**



# **Parent/Dancer Handbook**

## **Amherst Ballet's Mission**

With a conviction of the value of dance in our society, and a commitment to quality dance education, Amherst Ballet seeks to build a diverse and inclusive community of dancers and dance enthusiasts through educational programming, performance and community partnerships.

## **Amherst Ballet's Organization**

Amherst Ballet (AB) was founded in 1971 and is a non-profit organization (501(c)3), overseen by a volunteer Board of Directors and administered by an Artistic Director, a Business Manager and volunteer staff. AB offers classes in ballet and other forms of dance to students of ages 7 years and up. All of AB's classes are taught by instructors who are accomplished, experienced and well-educated.

# Staff and Board Communication

Please contact us with any questions, concerns or suggestions. The current staff and board members include:

**Madeleine Bonn**, Artistic Director  
[madeleine.bonn@yahoo.com](mailto:madeleine.bonn@yahoo.com)

**Koren Berrio**, Business Manager  
413-549-1555; [info@amherstballet.org](mailto:info@amherstballet.org)

## Board Members:

[Board@amherstballet.org](mailto:Board@amherstballet.org)

Barbara Krauthamer, Co-President  
Halina Radosz, Co-President  
Julianne Applegate

Wei Zhang, Treasurer  
Caroline Daman, Secretary

Instructors for specific classes and seasons are subject to change. For individual bios please visit <https://amherstballet.org/people/>

Instructors for 2021 - 2022 season include:

Madeleine Bonn  
Anna Plummer  
Sage Wilson  
Karen Michaels

Minh Sullivan  
Adele Fisk  
Stephanie Shumway  
Liesl Swogger

## Covid Precautions

Amherst Ballet is following the Center for Disease Control (CDC) Guidelines regarding COVID-19 mitigation and prevention, which are subject to change. At the time of this printing, there is a mask mandate in place for the town of Amherst. All students and visitors are required to wear a mask inside the building and during class.

# Classes and Performances

## Season

- The 2021-2022 season starts on Tuesday, September 7th, 2021 and ends on Saturday, June 18<sup>th</sup>, 2022.
- Amherst Ballet is closed on the following days:
  - November 24<sup>th</sup> – 27<sup>th</sup>
  - December 23<sup>rd</sup> – January 2<sup>nd</sup>
  - February 20<sup>th</sup> – 26<sup>th</sup>
  - April 17<sup>th</sup> – 23<sup>rd</sup>
  - Memorial Day (May 30<sup>th</sup>)

## Class Structure and Frequency

- Level I for 7-9 year olds: meets two (2) times per week for 1.25 hours per class.
- Level II for 9-11 year olds: meets two (2) times per week for 1.25 hours per class.
- Level III for 11-13 year olds: meets two (2) times per week for 1.5 hours per class.
- Level IV for 13-15 year olds: meets two (2) times per week for 1.5 hours per class.
- Intermediate and Intermediate Pointe for those who have completed Level IV: meets two (2) times per week for 1.5 hours and .5 hour per class respectively.
- Advanced and Advanced Pointe for those who have completed Intermediate and have been approved by the instructor: meets two (2) times per week for 1.5 hours and .5 hour per class respectively.
- Modern I for 8-12 year olds: meets one (1) time per week for 1.25 hours.
- Modern II for 13-15 year olds or those who do not have much previous experience: meets one (1) time per week for 1.25 hours.
- Modern III for 14 year olds and up or those who have sufficient previous experience: meets one (1) time per week for 1.5 hours.
- Hip Hop for 10 year olds and up: meets one (1) time per week for 1 hour.
- Adult Beginner Ballet: meets one (1) time per week for 1.5 hours.
- Adult Intermediate/Advanced Ballet: meets one (1) time per week for 1.5 hours. 2 sections.
- Gentle Ballet: meets one (1) time pre week for 1 hour.

All students will be placed in the level that is developmentally and technically appropriate for them at the outset of the season. Instructors may recommend adjustment of placement during the season.

Ballet classes will follow a structured classical ballet syllabus agreed upon by the faculty, that will cater closely to the students' technical and physical needs, as well as enabling their continued progression. It is important for the acquisition of skills and overall accomplishment that students commit to training at the specified frequency. Students unable to fulfill this commitment will not be turned away, but their acceptance is with the understanding that they may need to spend more than one season in each level. Students are expected to attend 80% of classes to participate in the end of season concert unless otherwise arranged with the Artistic Director.

Amherst Ballet recognizes that students have different areas of interest and levels of commitment to dance. We are happy to enroll dancers who wish to study ballet intensely as well as those who wish to

have dance as just one aspect of their lives. The number of weekly hours the dancer dedicates to dance may affect his/her performance opportunities at Amherst Ballet.

## Performances

Students will have the opportunity to perform at least once annually, if not more so throughout the school year, in various classwork showcases and/or choreography-based performances. Whether at a beginning, intermediate, or pre-professional level, it is imperative that dancers attend all required classes and rehearsals, and communicate any schedule discrepancies with the teacher/artistic director. Missed classes or failure to attend rehearsals, if not pre-arranged, may result in removal of performance opportunities.

## Placement

Students receive an evaluation from their instructors in May with recommendations for the next season's study. Promotion is not automatic. Promotion requires proper neuromuscular integration and developed attention span and focus. Non-promotion is not seen as a detriment but rather as a realization that not all bodies and brains develop the same way and that remaining in a level for more than one season may be the best option for training a dancer over the long-course.

## Attendance, Absence, Make up and Tardiness Policy

Parents of students or students themselves are requested to call or email AB when the dancer is absent. Make-up classes may be taken at any time during the season including in advance of a planned absence *at the same level or a lower level*. No credit will be given for missed classes, nor will tuition be adjusted (except for documented medical conditions when make-ups cannot be arranged).

Classes are expected to begin on time. Students should be ready and prepared to dance at the scheduled time. It is in everyone's best interest for students to *arrive early* so they are ready for class to begin as scheduled. Students who enter the studio late disrupt the flow of teaching and distract their fellow classmates. Joining classroom exercises late without proper warm-up may be injurious to dancers. If a student is more than 10 minutes late they may be asked by the instructor to observe the class rather than participate.

There should be no talking at all during class (excepting open class). Students' thoughts and questions are warmly welcomed and encouraged, but their hand should be raised first, so the teacher may call on them at the appropriate moments. Socializing amongst students should be kept/arranged outside of class/rehearsal times.

There will be two parent observation days scheduled during the season. This is an informal viewing; we warmly invite and encourage parents and family members to observe the classwork progress of students. Due to Covid precautions, such observation times may be offered virtually. Caregivers may request to observe additional classes with advanced request and at the discretion of the Artistic Director.

Parents **should not** enter the studio while a regular class is in session. If a parent needs to confer with the instructor, please visit the reception desk to arrange a conference time or e-mail [info@amherstballet.org](mailto:info@amherstballet.org).

## **Late Starters**

Students beginning dance as an older teenager or transferring from other programs are welcome at Amherst Ballet. After assessment by the Artistic Director, a custom course of classes will be assembled to facilitate the progress of the individual dancer.

## **Open Classes for Adult Dancers**

Adult dancers are welcome to attend Adult Beginner and Intermediate/Advanced classes and Gentle Ballet. Adults may also attend Intermediate or Advanced classes with the permission of the instructor with the understanding that the teacher's main focus will be on the school students, their specific technical and developmental needs; these classes are paid for on a single class basis or by purchasing a class card. Class cards expire one year from the date of purchase and no refunds will be given for unused class cards, except with the note of a doctor in the case of injury.

## **General Policies and Procedures For all Amherst Ballet Attendees**

All classes, rehearsals, observed holidays, vacations, and Amherst Ballet events are listed on the Master Calendar in “Schedule and Calendar” page of our website (<https://amherstballet.org/classes/schedule/>).

### **Inclement Weather Policy**

- The determination whether to hold classes and rehearsal will be made by noon by the Artistic Director. If weather threatens, please check our website, [www.amherstballet.org](http://www.amherstballet.org), and our Facebook page, to see if classes are being held. We will also alert you via email if classes and/or rehearsals are canceled, with the email address we have on file.
- In the event the weather turns bad during the time classes are in session, the decision to suspend classes will be made by the Artistic Director.
- Always be safe and use your best judgment about whether to attend class if the weather is bad. You can always arrange to do a make-up later in the season.

### **Registration, Drop-Add and Withdrawal Policy**

- Registrations for fall classes are accepted beginning in August. Open registration closes on September 30<sup>th</sup>. Any registrations or schedule changes after this date may require a placement class with the Artistic Director to determine the best level for the student.

- Class schedules for each dancer should be fixed by the end of September. Classes that are or become insufficiently enrolled may be canceled.
- Students wishing to add or drop classes after September 30<sup>th</sup> must first receive approval from the Artistic Director followed by parental notification to school by note or email. This is to ensure that parents know when their child is supposed to be at AB and that appropriate tuition is assessed.
- Withdrawals will date from the receipt of the email or note. Tuition charges will continue to accrue until written notice of withdrawal/change is received, no exceptions.
- Students wishing to withdraw completely from AB must have a **caregiver** submit a note or email to the Artistic Director; the date the Artistic Director receives the email/note will constitute the withdrawal date. Tuition will not be assessed after the withdrawal date. You will have one week to pay any outstanding balance before a late fee is assessed. Any account that goes into arrears longer than two months will be sent to an agency for collection.

## Registration and Payment Policies

- Returning students may register on-line through the Dance Studio Pro portal. The Parent Portal is your online access to your account. You can view past payments, make payments, view your outstanding balance and class schedule, and read AB communications, among other things, at the portal.
- To register, set up an account (if you have not done so already) and sign up for the classes recommended for your child. Current tuition rates are noted on the Dance Studio Pro registration interface. You need to pay the \$30 registration fee online or at the studio to activate registration.
- All payments made online are subject to a 3% convenience fee, while payments at the studio may be made by cash, check (made payable to Amherst Ballet, with the dancer's name in the memo portion of the check), or credit card. There is no fee associated with a credit/debit payment made in the studio.
- It is the responsibility of the parent(s) to ensure their account info is accurate and up to date. Amherst Ballet is not responsible for incorrect information entered into the DSP interface. We use your email address for announcements and billing. Your phone number is for emergency contact purposes only (should your dancer become ill or injured while at the studio). **YOU MUST ENTER BOTH AN EMAIL ADDRESS AND PHONE NUMBER TO ENROLL YOUR DANCER.**
- **Tuition is payable in advance.** Students may take class only if tuition is current. There are **no** tuition refunds.
- For enrolled dancers, your annual tuition is broken into 10 monthly payments. It is important to note that tuition **is not** charged based on the number of classes that month.
- A costume fee (if applicable) may be charged in addition to monthly tuition. This fee is due at the end of the month in which it was charged.
- Tuition may be remitted in:
  - One payment. If received by September 15<sup>th</sup>, you may deduct 3%.
  - Monthly installments, posted on the first of the month (Sep-June).
  - You may enroll in autopay; these payments will be processed on the 15th of the month to either your on-file credit card or bank account. **NOTE THAT AMHERST BALLET IS PCI COMPLIANT - NONE OF YOUR ACCOUNT INFO IS STORED ON AMHERST BALLET COMPUTERS, BUT RATHER SECURE SERVERS WITH OUR PROCESSING PARTNERS.**

- You may pay more than your monthly installment whenever you wish. However, it is your responsibility to check your account to know when your credit has been used up. You will still be responsible for a late fee if at any point your payment is late.
- Account statements will be accessible on the Parent Portal. Please inform the Business Manager if you do not have access to email or internet. Paper bills will be assessed a fee of \$1.
- You will be emailed a statement on the 1<sup>st</sup> of the month showing your account history. If payment has not been made by the 15<sup>th</sup> of the month, you will receive a payment reminder, followed by another on the 25<sup>th</sup> until the invoice has been paid. These will be your only notifications of an open balance before a late fee is assessed on the 1<sup>st</sup> of the following month.
- A late fee is charged for any unpaid portion on your account, **regardless of the amount**. It is your responsibility to pay your invoice in full before the end of the month. If you do not receive a statement or reminder email, it is still your responsibility to keep your account current. Not receiving either communication from AB does not remove you from the responsibility of paying your tuition and fees on time.
- Amherst Ballet accepts checks, cash, and credit/debit cards. Please make checks payable to *Amherst Ballet* and INCLUDE THE DANCER'S NAME.
- **If tuition payments are to be made by more than one party**, the Business Manager must be informed by note or email when the student enrolls.
- Payments received after the last day of the month will be assessed a late fee of \$10 and accrue a penalty of 1.5% of the outstanding balance per month until paid. This will be a recurring charge until your account is in good standing. (Example: If tuition is due by September 1<sup>st</sup>, and come October 1 the account has not been paid, you will be assessed \$10 **plus** 1.5% of the open balance. If on November 1 your September and October bills have not been paid, you will be charged \$10 **plus** 1.5% of the open balance **for each month**).
- If your account is in arrears for longer than one month, your dancer may not take classes or participate in rehearsals until the invoice has been paid in full. Ex.: If you have not paid your November tuition bill by January 1, your dancer may not take classes until your account is paid up in full.
- We cannot accommodate temporary withdrawals from the program. Please speak with the Artistic Director ahead of time if you know your child will have a temporary conflict (ex: seasonal sports or other performance commitments) to arrange a make-up schedule ahead of time.
- Adults may pay for a single class **before** the class begins, or buy a 5 or 10 class card. All adults need to sign-in at the reception desk and either pay or have the class card marked. Single Classes of Adult Beginner and Int/Adv Ballet cost \$18, 5 and 10 class cards cost \$85 and \$165 respectively and expire 1 year from the purchase date. Single Classes of Gentle Ballet cost \$15, 5 and 10 class card cost \$70 and \$135 respectively and expire 1 year from the purchase date. There are no refunds for unused classes, unless you have a written note from a doctor, in the case of injury.
- There will be a \$25 Insufficient Funds Fee charged for any checks that are returned from the bank for any reason. This fee will be charged per returned check. Appropriate late fees will then be assessed, if applicable.
- Convenience Fees paid online are not refundable.
- Do not leave payments on the reception desk. If no one is available to take your payment, please place it into the locked mailbox located outside the front door.
- If you are experiencing difficulties paying your monthly tuition, please communicate with the Business Manager as soon as possible. We will work with you to come up with a solution that satisfies both your needs and the needs of Amherst Ballet. We can only do this if we know there is a problem; otherwise it is assumed you are simply late on your payments and standard late fees and consequences will apply.

## Private Lessons

Amherst Ballet is able to help students schedule private lessons with our staff when needed. These lessons are designed for students looking to catch up to their peers, work through an injury or condition, or for students preparing for an audition outside of Amherst Ballet. Private lessons are in no way intended to help dancers achieve better roles in Amherst Ballet performances, but rather to help students achieve their goals as dancers. Private lessons will require a charge for the studio rental (see policy below – paid directly to Amherst Ballet) as well as the teacher’s time (this is negotiated by you with the teacher). Payment of tuition and fees **must be up-to-date** in order to use the facilities and payment for studio use must be paid on the date of the rental.

## Scholarships/Work-Study

Amherst Ballet is able to grant limited scholarships for regular season classes on a need-basis for students. Scholarships may take the form of reduced tuition and/or specify a work requirement.

Application for a scholarship must be requested during the summer enrollment period, prior to the commencement of the season, and returned promptly together with a copy of the parents’ tax return. Scholarships are awarded by a sub-committee of the Board of Directors in September. **You must keep your account in good standing in order to continue to receive scholarship monies on a monthly basis.** Failure to do so will result in all scholarship monies being forfeited.

## Studio Rental

Studio rental may be arranged for use by Amherst Ballet students wishing to use the AB studios outside of regularly scheduled classes and rehearsals, pending approval by the Artistic Director. A *Student Use of Facilities Request/Agreement Waiver & Release of Liability* form must be submitted to the Business Manager for approval no less than three days prior to the requested use date. Payment of tuition and fees **must be up-to-date** in order to use the facilities and payment for the studio use must be paid on the date of the rental. An adult must accompany the AB dancer in the studio and both understand that using the building per this agreement is a serious responsibility that is offered only to mature and responsible students. Violating the terms of the agreement will result in the loss of permission to use the building in the future. The cost per hour for use of the studio is \$20.

## Use of Image

Photographs and videos of AB dancers are frequently essential for AB grant applications, charitable fundraising, programs, instruction, website, FaceBook and YouTube postings, and general publicity. AB's Artistic Director reviews and selects all such images to ensure that they are appropriate, attractive, and demonstrate excellent technique.

## Appendix A: Uniform Requirements and Information

Students at AB are required to present themselves in class in appropriate dancewear and with hair neat.

### Female students

- Ballet: pink tights and pink ballet slippers. Please buy *Bloch, Capezio, Freed, Grishko, Mirella, Russian Point or Sansha* brand slippers with full soles.
  - Level I students wear lavender leotards with any sleeve style.
  - Level II students wear light blue leotards with any sleeve style.
  - Level III students wear purple leotards with any sleeve style.
  - Level IV students wear emerald/forest green leotards with any sleeve style.
  - Intermediate students wear royal blue/navy leotards with any sleeve style.
  - Advanced students wear red/burgundy leotards with any sleeve style.
  - Black leotards are acceptable for all levels if the colored ones cannot be found.
  - Matching chiffon skirts and warm-ups are allowed. It is expected that excess clothing will be removed as soon as feasible during class.
  - Long hair must be up off the neck and neatly in a bun, complete with hair tie, bobby pins, and hair net. Students should arrive to class with buns done. They should not expect the teacher or other students to do their bun for them. A neat ponytail is acceptable only if hair is too short to make a bun.
- Modern: long sleeved t-shirts and jazz pants or leggings. It is HIGHLY recommended to have knees and shoulders covered for all Modern classes.
- Hip Hop: Clean sneakers; Leggings or sweat pants; No shorts; Any top that is comfortable; Knee pads are not required but can be helpful for floor work.
- No jewelry, other than stud earrings, may be worn during class.
- Please arrive dressed for classes. Dressing rooms are currently closed as part of our Covid precautions and policies.

### Male dancers

- Ballet: black ballet slippers, dance belt, black tights (suspenders optional), and a white short-sleeve shirt or white leotard.
- Modern: long sleeved t-shirt and jazz pants.
- Please arrive dressed for classes. Dressing rooms are currently closed as part of our Covid precautions and policies.
-

## Open Classes Dress Code

### Female dancers

- Ballet slippers and leotards and tights or comfortable clothes that will allow full range of motion.
- If you are taking Intermediate and Advanced classes, please follow the guidelines above.

### Male dancers

- Ballet slippers and leotards and tights or comfortable clothes that will allow full range of motion.

## Buying & Selling Dancewear

Amherst Ballet offers for sale some new and some gently worn clothes (the “Resale Bins”) that are appropriate for classes. You may resell your dance uniforms and donate the proceeds to Amherst Ballet. Please see the Business Manager with resale donations.

AB recommends the following places for new dance clothes; **always call before visiting** to be sure of store hours:

Fancy Feet Plus  
67 East St  
Ludlow  
(413) 583-8779  
[www.fancyfeetplus.com](http://www.fancyfeetplus.com)

Mary Ann’s Dance and More  
163 B Northampton St.  
Easthampton  
(413) 282-0054  
[www.MaryAnnsDanceandMore.com](http://www.MaryAnnsDanceandMore.com)

### On-line:

New York Dancewear  
800-775-3262  
[www.nydancewear.com](http://www.nydancewear.com)

Discount Dance Supply  
800-328-7107  
[www.discountdance.com](http://www.discountdance.com)

## Appendix B: Pointe Policy

Students should begin pre-pointe exercises in Level III and pointework in Level IV, both of which are incorporated into their normal technique classes at the discretion of the teacher. It is absolutely **CRUCIAL** for both pre-pointe and current pointe students to do a minimum of 5 minutes of theraband ankle-strengthening exercises at home daily, if they have serious intentions of dancing safely/successfully en pointe.

Students should consult with the Artistic Director prior to going for the first pointe shoe fitting. Ribbons and elastics should **not** be sewn on until the instructor or Artistic Director has had a chance to evaluate the suitability of the shoes for the student. Specific instructions on how to sew ribbons and elastics will be given by an instructor during or after class.

## Appendix C: Performance Opportunities, Criteria and Communications

### Performance Opportunities

Performance opportunities are by audition and/or selection by the choreographer. All students selected to perform must have a **minimum of 80% regular attendance in classes**.

### Criteria for Performers

1. Performers are selected from the student body of Amherst Ballet, piece by piece, season by season, according to the needs of the repertoire and the choreographers.
2. The cast list and rehearsal schedules will be posted on the **Call Board**. Dancers shall be responsible for informing themselves of the time and place of these rehearsals and for attending them on time, prepared, equipped, and focused. Dancers are further responsible for keeping themselves informed of ongoing performance related information and schedule changes posted on the **Call Board**.
3. We endeavor to post the rehearsal schedule on our website (Master Calendar) and keep it current. When in doubt **refer to the Call Board**. Performers will be held responsible for **all** information as it is posted on the **Call Board**.
4. Dancers must acknowledge that rehearsal time is limited and each rehearsal is vital to the process as a whole and the overall quality of the final production. By agreeing to perform, they assume the responsibility of planning and behaving accordingly.
5. Dancers must discuss absences from rehearsal with the choreographer **prior** to a planned absence.
6. All dancers must be on time and warmed-up for all rehearsals. To be excused from any rehearsal due to illness or emergency, dancers must phone in. Unexcused tardiness and/or absence(s) may result in a dancer being removed from the cast at the discretion of the choreographer. While health information is private and protected, we ask that all families commit to inform Amherst Ballet if you have a positive case or concern for exposure to COVID in your home so that we may take necessary precautions or conduct contact tracing if needed.

7. Dancers must accept whatever roles are assigned to them in the repertory. Assignments reflect the choices of each choreographer and the overall requirements of the show and show flow.
8. Dancers are required to follow rules set for make-up and hair styling for performances. If female dancers choose to keep their hair short, they must assume financial responsibility of acquiring a hair piece to meet any long-hair requirements of pieces in which they are cast. Any drastic haircuts must be cleared with each choreographer when pieces are still in rehearsal phase; a performer may be asked to delay such a change until after the performance.
9. Dancers shall behave in such a way as to bring only credit and respect to Amherst Ballet, fellow company dancers, and themselves, understanding that continued participation in the program depends not only on ability, but upon attitude, personal development, and adherence to these guidelines.
10. Performing members must consult with the Artistic Director to audition or perform for any outside group, so that rehearsal conflicts can be avoided. Commitment to an Amherst Ballet performance first warrants priority over subsequent performance opportunities with other groups or organizations.

### **Communications Regarding Casting Decisions**

Parents and students are welcome to discuss any questions or concerns around casting decisions any time after a period of 48 hours following the posting of casting sheets. Please contact the Artistic Director, Madeleine Bonn.

# Signature Page

For dancers and their caregivers

This form is required of every dancer and should be returned the first week of classes in September.

I [*dancer's name*] \_\_\_\_\_ have read, understand and agree to the guidelines and practices that are set forth in the Parent-Dancer Handbook.

\_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Dancer signature (*Upper School Dancers Only*)

I, [*print name*] \_\_\_\_\_, have read and understand and agree to the guidelines and practices that are set forth in the Parent-Dancer Handbook.

\_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Parent/Guardian signature

\_\_\_\_\_  
Relationship to Dancer