

Amherst Ballet Student & Caregiver Handbook

Ballet for All!

Welcome to Amherst Ballet

Founded in 1971 by Therese Brady Donohue, our organization has been serving the Pioneer Valley community for generations, training dancers of all levels, ages, genders, and body types. We believe in the transformative power of dance and are committed to making quality ballet education accessible to all members of our community.

Our 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 performance, educational programming, and community partnerships.

Contact Information

Address:

65 Sunderland Road
Amherst, MA 01002

Phone: 413-296-1225

Email: info@amherstballet.org

Website: www.amherstballet.org

Studio Locations

We currently operate from our new studio location at 65 Sunderland Road, Amherst, MA 01002.

Dress Code Policy

General Guidelines

- All students must arrive in proper dance attire
- Hair must be secured neatly away from the face and neck
- Jewelry should be minimal or removed for safety
- No street clothes permitted in class
- Students not in proper dress code may be asked to observe class

Dress Requirements

- **Ballet Classes:** Leotard or fitted dancewear, tights or leggings, ballet shoes
- **Creative Movement Classes:** Comfortable fitted clothing that allows free movement, ballet shoes or bare feet
- **Pre-Pointe & Pointe Classes:** Standard ballet attire plus properly fitted pointe shoes (with instructor approval only)
- **Adult Classes:** Comfortable athletic wear suitable for movement, ballet shoes or bare feet as appropriate

Shoe Requirements

- **Ballet Shoes:** Properly fitted canvas ballet shoes in colors appropriate for class
- **Pointe Shoes:** Only with instructor permission and proper fitting consultation
- Shoes must be in good repair and properly fitted

Hair & Accessories

- Long hair must be secured neatly away from the face and neck
- Hair accessories should be minimal and secure
- Remove or minimize jewelry for safety

Academic Policies

Attendance

- Regular attendance is essential for progress and safety
- Students are expected to arrive 10 minutes prior to class start time and come prepared
- Students who are more than 10 minutes late to class may be required to observe
- Students who are injured should still come to observe class
- Students who miss more than 80% of their scheduled classes and do not make them up may not be allowed to participate in performances
- Make-up classes available with advance notice when possible

Tuition & Payment

- All tuition rates listed are for the full academic year. We strive to be as flexible as possible, and are able to offer partial year, monthly, and pro-rated tuition.
- Tuition is due by the 10th of each month
- Late fees may apply for overdue payments
- Payment plans available upon request

Cancellation Policy

- Students must commit for the full semester upon enrollment
- No refunds or credits will be issued for withdrawals mid-semester
- Emergency circumstances will be considered on a case-by-case basis

Scholarships

We have a generous trust-based scholarship program to support our mission of ballet for all. Contact the office for more information. Available scholarship funds include:

- **Young Dancer Scholarship Fund:** For elementary school-aged students
- **Maura Donohue Fund:** For middle and high school-aged students
- **Dance for Life Fund:** For adult students

Class Placement

- Students are placed according to experience and skill level
- Teacher recommendations required for level advancement

Performance Opportunities

Annual Performances

Amherst Ballet presents annual performances featuring student dancers of all ages, including adults. We offer a spring show and a winter show where students from all classes may participate. Recent productions include:

- "Working to Transcend"
- "Merry Pranks and Fairy Tales"

Company Programs

- **Amherst Ballet Company:** Advanced dancers ages 14+
- **Junior Company:** Intermediate dancers ages 10-14
- Auditions held annually in early fall

Community Outreach

The company also has a long history of engaging in outreach activities at schools, public libraries, and nursing homes in and around Amherst.

Studio Policies & Procedures

Health & Safety

- Students feeling unwell should stay home
- Injuries must be reported immediately to instructors
- First aid supplies available in studio
- Emergency contact information must be current
- All students must fill out a health waiver

Parent Observation

- Limited observation opportunities scheduled throughout the year
- Parents welcome at designated showcases and performances
- Regular classes are closed to maintain student focus

Behavior Expectations

- Respectful behavior toward instructors and fellow students
- Appropriate studio etiquette and discipline
- Students demonstrating disruptive behavior may be dismissed from class
- Repeated or egregious instances of disruptive behavior may result in families being asked to leave the school

Weather Cancellations

- Cancellations announced via email and social media
- Make-up classes scheduled when possible
- Check Facebook page and email for updates

Studio Rules

- Arrive 10 minutes before class begins
 - No street shoes, food, or drinks in studio (water permitted)
 - Personal belongings stored safely in designated areas
 - Cell phones must be silenced and put away during class
 - Respect studio property and equipment
-

Communication

Staying Connected

- **Email:** Confirm that info@amherstballet.org is approved for your inbox, to ensure you receive our emails and they don't go to your spam folder
- **Facebook:** Follow @amherstballet for updates and announcements
- **Instagram:** Follow @amherstballet for updates and announcements
- **Website:** www.amherstballet.org for current information
- **Phone:** 413-296-1225 for urgent matters

Important Dates

- Registration typically opens in late spring
 - Academic year runs September through June
 - Summer programs offered July-August
 - Holiday breaks follow local school calendar
-

Supporting Amherst Ballet

Amherst Ballet is a non-profit organization that relies on community support. Ways to help include:

- **Donations:** Tax-deductible contributions welcome via cash, check, or PayPal from our website, www.amherstballet.org
- **Volunteer Opportunities:** To help with performances and events, reach out to board@amherstballet.org
- **Community Engagement:** Attend performances and spread the word
- **Scholarship Fund Contributions:** Support dancers in need

Send checks to:
Amherst Ballet
65 Sunderland Road
Amherst, MA 01002

Frequently Asked Questions

Q: What age can my child start ballet?

A: We offer creative movement classes starting at age 3.

Q: Do you offer trial classes?

A: Please contact the office to discuss trial class opportunities.

Q: Are performances mandatory?

A: Performance participation is encouraged but not required for most classes.

Q: Do you offer adult classes for complete beginners?

A: Yes! We welcome adult beginners and offer classes specifically designed for new adult dancers.

Thank you for choosing Amherst Ballet. We look forward to sharing the joy of dance with you and your family!

Revised: September 2025

This handbook is subject to updates. Please check the website and email communications for the most current information.