



2020-2021 Handbook

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www.swbtballet.org

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profile

Southwest Ballet Theatre is a 501c3 non-profit organization that provides high quality dance education as well as professional performances to the community at an affordable price. By attaining federal grants and the broader community's monetary support, SWBT does not require each participant to pay significant theatre, costume or other fees associated with a production. SWBT offers a seamless transition from the dance studio to the stage. As a pre-professional studio, SWBT will prepare the dancer not only for the professional stage, but also for a well rounded education in the performing arts.

mission

To enrich, inspire, and uplift lives through classical dance education and performance.

values

Environment: Through a safe, nurturing, positive and structured environment that promotes excellence in dance and individual fulfillment in accomplishment, Southwest Ballet Theatre prides itself in offering a premier venue for children to experience, actively and authentically, the world of dance.

Training: Quality training by dedicated teachers, currently active as well as former professional artists, allows our young people to continually observe the connection between training and results.

Performances: Production development, polished performance, commitment to the company, and personal responsibility are all emphasized as integral components of the complete dance experience at SWBT.

Community: Instilling a mindfulness that the arts bring awareness, unity, and diversity among a community is a core value of SWBT. SWBT brings an historic art form to the broader Southwest Valley of Phoenix cultivating the pursuit, continuation, and love for the performing arts. Without the support of the community, SWBT would not exist.

Dedication: We strive to provide this unique experience to all children willing to dedicate the time and effort required to participate. These skills will follow the dancer through their lives.

Excellence: The highest effort is expected from our dancers. Daily training, in class and in rehearsal is to benefit the technique, artistry and fitness of the dancer to accomplish their goals.

Safety: The safety of our dancers and instructors is of first importance at SWBT. SWBT will stay current in COVID-19 protocols. SWBT also protects the health of our dancers by providing the highest quality equipment and studio space for our dancers while in the studio.

One of the unique benefits of participating in SWBT is the community that is gained through this type of group experience. We have always taken very seriously an emphasis on setting good examples of mentorship, generosity, commitment and kindness to others. Parents, please talk to your dancer about these core principles of the group, and clarify their understanding of this commitment, no matter what their age.

communication

The primary way SWBT will communicate to our families is through email. The emails will be sent through our administrative assistant, Sydney Walker. Please make sure that you are receiving the emails. All rehearsals,

class changes, important announcements, etc. will be communicated and you will be responsible for the information. Sydney's email address is admin@swbtballet.org or call 623-250-6366. Please contact her if you have any changes that need to be made to your contact information.

repertoire

At Southwest Ballet Theatre, we take pride in presenting professional performances that are affordable & accessible to the community

In winter, we will be performing Daniel Baudendistel's version of the popular classic The Nutcracker and will strive to continue this holiday tradition each winter.

Due to COVID-19 restrictions, the Showcase and Spring performance will be finalized at the beginning of 2021.

class placement

Every year, all dancers will be placed into the appropriate leveled class given the dancer's age, skill, experience, and technical ability. This policy is in place to protect the dancer from injury and overall frustration based on their skill level. Dancing, just like any sport, is physically demanding. It is SWBT's commitment to teach with informed theory and practices that protects the dancer physically, psychologically, developmentally, and socially. The benefits for our dancers are immense when placed in the appropriate developmental level.

leveled classes

Each level has been carefully considered regarding the developmental stages of the child. There are many factors to consider: motor and emotional development, control, balance, brain development, experience and training. All dancers will undergo an assessment to determine which level to be placed in. The determination is decided by the instructor, and then agreed upon with the parent and dancer.

****Note, these levels will be implemented when SWBT exits COVID-19 restrictions.****

Pre-ballet/Pre-primary (ages 3 and older): This level is to introduce the young dancer to gross motor movement and imaginary playful movement. Dancers learn etiquette and discipline while having fun at the same time. Dancers will gain coordination, balance, posture, placement and musicality.

Primary (ages 5-7): This level will introduce strengthening exercises using floor work, developing flexibility, alignment and placement. Dancers will begin to understand the concept of musical phrasing, begin using ballet vocabulary, introduce basic ballet fundamentals, develop the sense of turning, and understand controlled versus jumping movements. The barre will not be utilized during this phase of development to aid the dancer to acquire balance, alignment, turnout, placement, and centralization of the body.

Level 1 (ages 8 and older): Dancers will begin to be introduced to a broader ballet technique which will lay the foundation for their more advanced steps as they grow and mature. Ballet vocabulary is enforced, the barre is utilized as well as the centre, and the dancer will have a definite sense of mastery over the curriculum.

Level 2 (ages 9 and older): Dancers should have the working knowledge of the ballet vocabulary learned in Level 1 and the theory of the previous levels.

Level 3 (ages 10 and older): All of the vocabulary of the previous levels continue and new theory and technique will be added.

Level 4 Pre-Pointe (ages 11 and older): Pointe work will not be considered before the age 11, but note that the dancer will not automatically be introduced to pointe work because they are 11 years old. Going onto pointe is determined by the previous training of the dancer (must have 3-4 year of ballet training) in order to prevent injury and allow for the success of the dancer.

Level 5 beginning pointe (ages 12 and older): Dancers obtain confidence and strength in their pointe work during their training at this level. Dancers at this level will be selected for corps de ballet.

Level 6 advanced pointe (ages 12 and older): Dancers who demonstrate proficiency in pointe work and ballet technique will be placed in this level. All solo/principle roles will be chosen from this level.

evaluations

Following each performance, it is required that each dancer receives an evaluation from his/her instructors. Parents are required to be present during the evaluation meeting with the dancer. The purpose of the evaluation is to build confidence in identifying the dancer's strengths as well as areas in their training that needs improvement for their given level. Each dancer will receive a rubric outlining their proficiency both technically and artistically both in the classroom and onstage. A schedule will be released for where each dancer and parent can meet with the instructor privately to discuss their progress. The evaluation schedule will follow the previously planned classroom schedule.

code of conduct

In order to promote a safe and nurturing environment at SWBT, the following code of student conduct must be agreed upon between the student and the parent.

1. All dancers will be courteous and respectful to one another, to their teachers and to all school staff. For any dancer whose attitude, discipline or overall conduct is unsatisfactory, the dancer will be talked to and then if needed, the parent will be notified.
2. Dancers will promptly report any injury or illness that occurs while they are at SWBT to their teacher.
3. Dancers will arrive and leave SWBT with appropriate clothing covering their dance wear. They are not to arrive or leave SWBT in only their dance wear.
4. Students will respect that SWBT rents EMCC and the lobby is a public place; and students will conduct themselves appropriately, talking quietly and keeping the lobby area clean.
5. Students will eat only in designated areas.

bullying policy

Bullying, hazing, and harassment are prohibited. Dancers may not participate in any of these actions. Dancers may not solicit others to participate in/or aid and abet any of these actions. It is not a defense by the pepe-

trator(s) that the bullying, hazing, or harassment victim consented or acquiesced in the activity. All dancers and staff are responsible for taking reasonable measures to prevent bullying, hazing, and harassment. “Reasonable measures” do not allow or justify the victim to return in-kind. Such in-kind actions on the part of the victim will be considered a violation of SWBT policy. If a dancer is a victim of bullying, hazing, or harassment, the dancer should ask the perpetrators to stop. If the actions do not stop, the dancer should inform a teacher or an administrator. If the dancer does not feel comfortable informing a school representative, they must inform a parent or guardian who will in turn inform the school. The victim must report the bullying, hazing or harassment in order for SWBT to implement an action plan to resolve the situation. Retaliation by the perpetrator(s) in the form of further actions, including organized shunning of the victim, will result in further disciplinary action against the perpetrator(s) up to and including expulsion.

class etiquette

No matter where you are in the world, class etiquette is absolute and remains a constant in our art form. Please observe the following guidelines for all classes at SWBT:

Be prompt. Arrive early for class, and go immediately into the studio, if there is no class, and begin stretching.

Dress appropriately. SWBT has a specific dress code for each technique – please see the Dress Code page for details. No warmers, T-shirts, or jewelry. Tights should be clean and pulled down around feet. Hair should be tied up neat in a bun.

Focus and pay attention to the exercises, instructions, and corrections. When the teacher is speaking — whether the correction pertains to you or not — the instructor should have your full attention. No talking.

Stay at your place at the barre. Stay with your assigned group while going across the floor.

No chewing gum, eating, or drinking. You may take a drink between barre and center.

Cell phones are to be put away and are strictly prohibited to be used in the studio. If a dancer needs to get in touch with a parent, the dancer must do so between classes or rehearsals and used in the lobby. The teacher reserves the right to confiscate cell phones if used against SWBT policy.

If you need to leave the classroom, please stand at the door and the instructor will nod their head to give permission to leave. Do not interrupt the instructor to ask permission.

Complete every exercise to the best of your ability. Giving up half way through an exercise is counterproductive.

During rehearsals, all dancers are required to dance full out for every rehearsal unless given express permission from the rehearsal director. All dancers must be dressed in ballet uniform while dancing (no baggy clothes) and have appropriate shoes.

If you are receiving a correction on a particular movement — whether personally or for the entire class — physically display the correction for the teacher. The energy and enthusiasm you present in class will affirm to the instructor your desire to improve and learn.

No displays of rude behavior. A good attitude towards learning will help make the work easier. Rolling eyes, temperamental outbursts, or disrespect toward an instructor or other dancers will not be tolerated. Leave correcting and commenting on other students' dancing to the teacher.

Applaud at the end of class, and thank the teacher personally with a curtsy. Each class is a ritual to treasure and to be danced like a true performance. Dancing is a physical, mental, and spiritual art form. You must engage yourself completely each time you are in class. In general, you will have a more enjoyable and successful experience if your manners are impeccable. Remember your teachers are attempting to pass on their knowledge from varied experiences. There are many different approaches to training, and they are all good. Take heed of their advice and wisdom, and be grateful for their time and attention.

dress code

The dress code for leveled classes are strictly enforced. A dress code has been implemented to allow our dancers to develop a sense of the corps de ballet. Corps de ballet is a French word that means "body of the ballet". Everything the dancer does reflects this unity; especially in the way the dancers move, dress and then dance together. This begins in the classroom and will be reflected on the stage. One small way to feel this sameness is to have a uniform.

Each level will be represented by a different color. The uniforms will be purchased online through Discount Dance Supply. Once on the website, go to "find your teacher" enter the studio name. This will take you to each individual leveled class uniform.

attendance policy

Attendance is essential for growth and progress for the dancer. Each dancer will be expected to attend every class that is assigned. Attendance is a strong factor when student progress is evaluated and level placement considered.

Students in all levels will have their attendance taken in the classroom by their teacher. Students are encouraged to make up missed classes in the same or a lower level class.

Be prompt for rehearsal, and ready to dance at the time you are called: shoes on, fully stretched and ready to go at all times. Dancers should be prepared to stay for the entire rehearsal in the room with the artistic director/ballet mistress/choreographer unless otherwise directed.

procedure for absences/lateness

absences

1. If you are sick or there is an emergency call 623-250-6366 or e-mail admin@swbtballet.org to inform immediately.
2. If planned absences are expected for rehearsals, write each absence anticipated on your contract prior to the audition. Only 2 are permitted.
3. If planned absences are expected for classes, please communicate to the instructor of the class ahead of time.

4. The assistant director, choreographer and artistic director reserve the right to ask the dancer to step down from their role if attendance is not in adherence with SWBT policies.

Lateness

1. If arriving late to class, please call/text the administrative assistant before so that the instructor knows nothing out of courtesy—we worry and will call if you do not show up!
2. When arriving to the studio, please get dressed and prepared for class. When ready for class, please stand at the door for the instructor to welcome you into the class
3. If you are more than 15 minutes late for class, you will be asked to sit out of the class. A make up class is permitted. The dancer will be responsible for warming themselves up if rehearsal follows the class.
4. Please be prompt in picking your child from class and rehearsal. If any student is left for more than 15 minutes without a ride, a \$30 fee will be assessed. Our staff would be held responsible to stay with your child to maintain safety as well as to lock up the theatre.

auditions and casting

All dancers must participate in called auditions for each production. Dancers should be dressed in pink tights, a solid leotard, hair neatly in a bun, and appropriate dance shoes. No dancer, who has agreed to the contractual requirements, will be cut from the audition and all audition participants will receive a role in the upcoming production.

When a new ballet is being developed the choreographer is given absolute autonomy in choosing which dancers they would like to cast.

The casting list will be posted within seven days at the studio. Dancers are expected to initial by their role(s) and their name to notify artistic staff that they are aware of their role(s) and the acceptance of such.

If for some reason a dancer cannot participate in the audition due to illness or unforeseen circumstances then they will be evaluated in class. There are no private auditions scheduled.

A dancer may be cast as an understudy. It is important to learn this role as diligently as the primary dancer. There have been many times in the past that a dancer has sustained an injury or has been unable to fulfill their commitment, so understudies are expected to be at all of these rehearsals as well as rehearsals for their primary roles.

Remember, each role is important, from the smallest role to the principal roles, and the process must be consistent. It is a part of every dancer's development to experience many different types of roles. We expect the dancer to respect any and every role they earn. Dancers should not anticipate casting decisions before the cast list is posted. There are some years that dancers will repeat the same role and this should not be taken as an insult, but as an opportunity to perform the role with more maturity and confidence. Think of the life of a professional who performs the same roles hundreds of times night after night. Repetition is good!

If you attend the audition, it is understood that you are committed to performing in the production prior to casting decisions. Dancers who would consider dropping out of the production if they do not receive a desired part should not attend the audition.

SWBT is committed to providing its audience with the highest caliber productions. Although a dancer may

tress right away. You may not alter the costume yourself!

5. Return all parts: All parts of your costume must be returned at the end of each rehearsal and performance to the costume rack. Dancers who are missing parts of their costume will be charged the cost of the lost article.

6. Sharing Costumes: The expectation is that each dancer is responsible for their own costumes in the theater. You will most likely be sharing your costume with other cast members, make sure the next dancer has all of its parts and placed in the appropriate location.

7. Tights and Shoes: Each dancer is responsible to provide their tights and shoes. Tights must be clean and without any stains, holes, or runs. Shoes must also be clean and neatly sewn.

technical week "tech week"

Parents, it is important to understand the nature of technical rehearsals. For levels preballet-Level 2, specific pick up times will be given. For Levels 3-6, there is no exact time to give you when your dancer will begin or end. If rehearsals are from 5-9 pm we expect them to stay the whole time. We do our best to stay as close to the schedule as possible, but there are always unforeseen circumstances in live theater. The dancing is only a portion of the whole production. Please be patient with changes and delays.

Dancers must remain at all rehearsals until the ballet mistress, artistic director or artistic advisor excuses them.

It is highly recommended that the dancers receive their homework for tech week in advance. Time management with these productions and school is crucial. Dancers should use Friday and Sunday to get ahead each week. Young dancers should speak to the older dancers about their own strategies to stay on top of their workload. Part of each dancer's contract is to keep a GPA that is within their potential, and that has been agreed upon with the parents. SWBT will not be responsible for failed academics.

Pack enough food for an after school snack and dinner. Please be aware that due to the amount of activity the dancers output they need more calories than the average person and a diet very high in protein.

Parents, we appreciate all of your concerns, but technical week is not the time to address concerns regarding your child. It is important to speak to the right person concerning any problems prior to tech week.

backstage polices (technical week and days of production)

"Call" is when the dancer has been asked to be in the theatre. This gives the dancer enough time to prepare; getting make up, costumes, warm ups, etc. ready before their warm-up/rehearsal/performances start. Please be aware of this time and come as close to the call time as possible. It will help reduce stress and anxiety for your dancer.

"Places" All dancers must remain in their designated dressing area until they are called to their "places"; the time for them to be backstage to perform. If you leave the area you will most likely miss your dance or be late which affects everyone. Be aware and be ready.

“Company warm up:” All dancers in Level 4-6 must participate in company warm-up prior to rehearsal and/or performances.

“We are guests in the theatre” We are guests in the EMCC theatre and studio. We must respect the space and those who work behind the scenes, yet are integral participants in our productions. Dancers may not run, yell, eat, or vandalize the theatre space. Dancers may not disrespect/talk back to those who are co-laboring backstage to make our productions a success. The artistic director or president of the SWBT board reserves the right to dismiss any dancer from the production if these policies are violated.

“Quiet voices only” when backstage. Noise travels right into the audience and they can hear the backstage commotion. Only speak if it is absolutely necessary.

“Stay in your dressing room” Dancers levels preballet-level 3 must be supervised at all times. It is suggested that dancers bring homework, headsets, or a book for downtime.

supporting SWBT

SWBT is non-profit organization. Word of mouth is our best advertisement. It has played a large role in helping both the school and the company grow. Ticket sales are the biggest portion of our income, so please help fill up productions by inviting friends and family. The more tickets sold the less the expenses for the theater, lighting designer, technical crew, costumes and contracted professional dancers. Please see if your company provides matching gifts.

Please help us continue to grow by spreading the word about our beautiful productions; your guests will not be disappointed. We promise!

outreach events

We are developing our outreach events. As volunteers, we depend on you to make SWBT present in the community. Our mission is to affect the lives of our community through this beautiful art. If you have ideas about how to reach our community, please discuss with the board president.

financial sustenance

SWBT is always looking for avenues to support its productions. Any parents or friends who work for large corporations that may be interested in funding scholarships, productions or donations please contact a member of the Board of Directors.

It is appreciated if you propose an idea in writing or by e-mail; the Artistic staff is busy teaching and running the school during the class hours.

appendix A

Dancer Contract

As an **SWBT Dancer**:

1. I agree to **read and follow the guidelines** set within the Southwest Ballet Theatre Handbook with my parent (if under 19) so that we are all cognizant of the responsibilities and requirements of Company participation.

Initials _____

2. I agree to **attend the minimum amount of ballet technique class hours weekly** according to my level and as appropriate to my contract.

If from another studio, I must show proof of taking a minimum amount of classes per week signed by the artistic director and must enroll in one technique class per week at SWBT.

Initials _____

3. I agree to **attend all rehearsals called**, on time warm and prepared to dance. I agree to **not miss more than two rehearsals for each production**. I agree to notify in writing all known obligations that will prohibit me from attending rehearsals. **Failure to notify in advance will result in a \$25 fine.**

Initials _____

4. I agree to **maintain my grades at school** at the level agreed with my family.

Initials _____

5. I agree to **attend and/or participate** in all company group activities in regards to **fundraising, outreach, and other company group functions**.

Initials _____

6. I agree to maintain appropriate conduct on and off the premises of Southwest Ballet Theatre.

Initials _____

7. I agree to **accept all** casting decisions.

Initials _____

8. I will maintain proper etiquette for class and rehearsal.

Initials _____

9. I will not use drugs or alcohol.

Initials _____

10. I understand **that no cell phones or media are permitted in the studio** during rehearsals or class. If used, cell phones will be confiscated until the end of rehearsal.

Initials _____

This contract is written in good faith between the dancer and Southwest Ballet Theatre. By signing this contract you are agreeing to uphold all the policies stated in the Southwest Ballet Theatre Handbook as well as the list of agreements above. The policies stated in this contract are binding and any individual who is not abiding this agreement will be immediately excused from Southwest Ballet Theatre.

I agree to the terms of this contract and I have read and understand SWBT's Handbook.

Dancer

Date

Parent (if Dancer is under 19 years of age)

Date

appendix B

Parent Agreement:

1. I agree to commit to a minimum of two hours per production of volunteer service to the company.

Initials _____

2. I am aware of my child's commitment and responsibility to the company, class and rehearsal, and I am fully prepared to support my child's commitment with attire, event participation, and transportation as needed to class and rehearsal as well as all other needs.

Initials _____

3. I am aware that a \$30 charge will be made if a staff/faculty member is left supervising a dancer due to late pick up.

Initials _____

This contract is written in good faith between the parent and Southwest Ballet Theatre. By signing this contract you are agreeing to uphold all the policies stated in the Southwest Ballet Theatre Handbook as well as the list of agreements above. The policies stated in this contract are binding and any individual who is not abiding this agreement will be immediately excused from Southwest Ballet Theatre.

I agree to the terms of this contract and I have read and understand SWBT's Handbook.

Parent

Date

appendix B

Parent Volunteer Sign-Up

Southwest Ballet Theatre is dependent upon parent volunteers. While the artistic faculty is working to set choreography, technique and staging, parents will be busy. This load is not burdensome if every parent unit commits to 4 hours per production. There are many ways to help, even from your home.

In addition to volunteering for four hours per production, each parental unit will be responsible for participating in any fundraiser we might hold. As a non-profit entity, we depend on donations and grants in order to afford such costly productions.

These volunteer hours are non-negotiable. The artistic director will be keeping track of each family's participation. If these criteria are not met, the student will be dismissed from the SWBT performing company.

As part of your contractual agreement, please understand that your involvement as a parent volunteer is crucial to the vitality of Southwest Ballet Theatre.

Please initial where you think you will be able to volunteer for each category below:

The Nutcracker

_____ Costume Fitting (Helping fit costumes on costume fitting day. Please indicate if you have sewing skills)

_____ Costume alterations (Altering existing costumes)

_____ SugarPlum Shoppe, headed by Elizabeth Seufert (Pricing, decorating, and manning table during performances)

_____ Ticket Counter (Selling tickets at door and assisting with will call tickets)

_____ Backstage hands (Helping pull props off stage, getting dancers ready with cues, keeping dancers quiet, helping with quick changes)

_____ Dressing Room (Helping dancers in dressing rooms get dressed, make up applied, and assisting with quick changes, escorting dancers through hallways)

_____ Ushers (Greeting patrons and handing out programs at event)

Confidential Volunteer Background Check Authorization

Print Name: _____
(First) (Middle) (Last)

Former Names(s) and Dates Used: _____

Current Address Since: _____
(Mo/Yr) (Street) (City) (Zip/State)

Previous Address From: _____
(Mo/Yr) (Street) (City) (Zip/State)

Previous Address From: _____
(Mo/Yr) (Street) (City) (Zip/State)

DOB: _____ Telephone Number: _____

Driver's License Number/State: _____

Please answer the following questions. If you reply "yes" to either question you may give additional information on the back of this page.

Has the applicant ever been convicted of any crime? _____

Has the applicant ever been involved in any lawsuit, claim, or criminal charge involving sexual abuse, sexual molestation, or sexual misconduct? _____

The information contained in this application is correct to the best of my knowledge. I hereby authorize Southwest Ballet Theatre and its designated agents and representatives to conduct a review of my background for volunteer purposes. I understand that the scope of the background check may include, but is not limited to the following areas: civil and criminal history records from any criminal justice agency in any or all federal, state, county jurisdictions; driving records and any other public records.

I further authorize any individual, company, firm, corporation, or public agency to divulge any and all information, verbal or written, pertaining to me, to or its agents. I further authorize the complete release of any records or data pertaining to me which the individual, company, firm, corporation, or public agency may have, to include information or data received from other sources. Southwest Ballet Theatre and its designated agents and representatives shall maintain all information received from this authorization in a confidential manner in order to protect the applicant's personal information, including, but not limited to, addresses and dates of birth.

Signature: _____ Date: _____

appendix C

December 18, 2020 Update

fees

Participation in each SWBT production has an associated membership fee. Membership fees are as follows:

Nutcracker Fee: waived due to COVID-19

Showcase/Spring Production: to be determined