

Carmichael School of Dance and Theatre Arts



Student Handbook 2019/2020

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1. Introduction

In this handbook we will outline all the information about our dance school, its rules and regulations, and our code of conduct we expect from our students and parents. One of our main purposes to provide services and training in the utmost professional manner and aim to instill these qualities in our students whilst hoping to provide for the needs of the hobbyist child and the career-minded child.

We are a family run business and have been for over 30 years. Not only do we aim for a professional service but also a family atmosphere where our students can make lifelong friends and special memories. If you have any questions about the handbook, the school or anything else please feel free to get in touch with us we will be happy to answer any questions.

We provide classes in Ballet, Modern, Tap, Jazz, Singing, Drama, Musical Theatre, GCSE and A LEVEL Dance, Festival Competition Dances and Examinations Classes for most of these genres. We also offer teacher training in Ballet, Modern and Tap through the ISTD and RAD these classes are usually held in the day based on a student and teacher arrangement.

All our teachers and staff are fully qualified with teaching qualifications from the ISTD and RAD examination boards. They also have first aid certifications and are fully CRB/DBS checked. Every temporary member of staff/teacher or visiting professional is always fully checked before being allowed to teach.

2. Fees

A) Trials

- i. We provide a three-week prepaid trial service, where a new student can try three classes of their choice. This is a smaller commitment than signing up for a whole half term of classes. After this trial, if the student wishes to continue with us, they can then be signed on for the rest of the term and purchase the uniform required for their chosen class.
- ii. The three classes chosen can be all the same genre or all different genres. The final trial price will be based on which classes are selected for the trial.

B) Payments

- i. There are three terms in a year – Autumn, Spring and Summer. Therefore, there are six half terms of invoices to be paid throughout the year. Our term dates are generally based around the school term dates with some variations. All our term dates and holidays are posted on our website or can be found up on our information board in reception.
- ii. Invoices (or Bills) for classes are sent out half termly, (come Sept 2019 all will be sent out via email) and are required to be paid within the first two weeks of each half term. If your child does three or more classes with us, if paid in the first two weeks they receive our discount. We retain the invoices on our

system and aim to keep these as up to date as possible as the term progresses.

- iii. The discount offered is 10% of your full invoice if your child does three or more classes with us. This discount also applies if you have multiple children attending our school and their lessons combined make three or more classes. However as stated previously, the discount only applies within the first two weeks of every half term.
- iv. Invoices can be paid online or in person through reception at the school. We also offer a pay monthly direct debit service which allows those with larger invoices to manage their payments more incrementally or those who just find it easier to set up a monthly payment and keep ahead of their invoices.
- v. There are no alterations to invoices based on a student's attendance, only if the school itself must close due to unforeseen circumstances, everyone will be notified of closures and invoices altered accordingly.
- vi. If you find yourself in a position that you are unable to pay your invoice, please don't leave it to the last moment to start communicating with us about alternatives or options. There are plenty of options to consider for any situation and we are happy to discuss and agree on these with you.
- vii. We will issue a reminder about invoice payments before the end of each half term via email or text whichever is your preference (if not directly told, default will be by email). If it gets to the end of the half term and the invoice hasn't been paid, we will issue a warning notice. If the fees aren't paid before the deadline given, no classes will be allowed.

C) Attendance

- i. A high level of attendance is important for all our students, the higher the attendance the direct correlation to the student's progression and understanding of the class work.
- ii. All class payments are to be made in advance of the term or within the first three weeks of a half term. Students' attendance does not affect the invoice as stated previously, unless discussed and agreed upon in advance with the principal Miss Nicola and the Administrator Mark.
- iii. Attendance will also determine whether the student is considered for an exam or ready to move up to the next stage of their class. Showing a commitment to their class through their attendance is a professional courtesy we expect to see from our students.

3. Uniform

A) Class Uniform

- i. Our class uniform is based on the requirements from our dance and examination boards – the ISTD and RAD. The purpose of all our uniform is to give the students a sense of unity with their classmates and a sense of pride as they move through the class stages progressing through the different uniforms.
- ii. The dance uniform we require the students to wear during class allows the teacher to assess the students technique during class and keep an eye on their body structure to check for muscle or skeletal imbalances as they grow up, these, if found early enough, can be readdressed through physio and exercises to rebalance the body or just acknowledged and worked around through their work to attain the best progression they can.

B) School Uniform

- i. Our dance school does have its own branded leisurewear. This is not compulsory for the students to purchase but does give them a sense of unity with their other classmates, a professional representation of belonging to our school to wear out during performances or when representing our school at events.

4. Facilities

A) Studios

- i. Our studios have been purpose built for dancing, with sprung floors, mirrors, ballet barres, plenty of ventilation and heating. We have two large studios that can be divided into smaller studios with the use of moveable walls. The studio size is decided based on the need of use and the walls are put in place by the teacher or with the teacher's supervision. At any one time we could have only 1 or all 4 studios being used at once.

B) Changing Rooms (+ Boys)

- i. We have two purpose made Changing Rooms for our students, one downstairs for the younger students, where parents may enter to assist their smaller children get changed. Whereas the upstairs changing room is for the older students (from school year 7 upwards) who can change by themselves.
- ii. There are lockers available to rent for a small fee, that allows are senior students to store their dance equipment at the school if they wish.
- iii. There is a boy changing room upstairs next to The Hub. This does have the same age rule generally, but if there are younger boys who are old enough to want to use it below school year 3, they may.
- iv. On the very odd occasion there may be an instance where we will use a changing room for a singing/drama lesson due to a need for a big studio most likely for exam preparation, this will most likely be further into the evening when the changing rooms aren't so heavily used.

C) Reception

- i. Reception is the first room you enter when coming into the dance school. This area has sofa's and is a waiting area for several parents during classes. The reception itself is at the back of the room next to the information board that has a number of information posters that contain some of our information which is also in this handbook, as well as future events and workshops to sign up for and the current schools timetable.
- ii. Our receptionist is our main hub of information and communication, they will be able to assist you in almost all matters regarding the school unless it is something specific to your child's progression in lesson or a certain event a teacher is organising. In that case you will either need to speak to the teacher directly or leave a message with reception to pass on.
- iii. We would ask that you don't consume food or drink in reception and that if you do have food or drink to have during your wait you move to the changing room to do so.
- iv. We also ask that if you are waiting in reception you remain as quiet as possible for the receptionist to be able to listen and take phone calls and be able to interact easily with other customers at reception. If you also have small children with you, please bring something to entertain them as not to disturb the receptionist or the classes going on just next door to reception.
- v. There is also a sofa behind reception underneath the stairs that is also for customer use while waiting during class times. However, we ask that this be kept clear and not used as a changing room as it is a fire exit.

D) The Hub

- i. This room is above reception it is a study centre mainly for GCSE, A LEVEL and teacher training. However, when not in use during a lesson time, it can be used as a study room for the students to do homework or revision between classes. We ask that they keep the room as tidy as possible and leave the room how they found it. It can also be used as a meeting room for the teachers to discuss things in private with students and parents if required.

E) Upstairs

- i. For child protection reasons, no parents or visitors are allowed upstairs without permission from a member of staff and therefore we ask for them to remain downstairs.

5. Car Park

A) Limit

- i. Our car park located on the front of our premise has space for 20 cars. This 20 includes usually the use of 3 spaces for teacher cars. Therefore, at max capacity we have space for 17 cars. Our car parking spaces are clearly visible with painted lines.
- ii. There are numerous times throughout the week where our car park is at max capacity and there will be no room for you to park. If this occasion occurs, we ask that you find a sensible place up the road to park and NOT across the road in front of the new houses.
- iii. We have a car park supervisor who is in place to guide you all in the car park regarding parking safely, availability and manoeuvring. The supervisor will have great knowledge of who drives what type/size of car, the timings of the timetable for people leaving and arriving and where is best for you to get in and out of.

B) Damage

- i. We do not accept responsibility for any damage that happens on our car park. Our gates are always set as far back as they go, and cars entering the car park are at greater risk of damage if they enter too quickly. Please enter our car park slowly and heed the advice of the car park supervisor in regard to parking in the car park.

6. Behaviour

A) Students

- i. We expect our students to commit to classes, and arrive in a timely manner to class, in uniform including hair properly tied back. The teacher will collect the younger classes from the changing room, however when it comes to the more intermediate and senior students, we expect the students to begin managing their own time and being responsible for themselves.
- ii. We expect our students from an early age to begin their journey towards professionalism. We help nurture this through our rigorous exam training which teaches them a hard work ethic in class and at home through practise, but also the code of conduct they must abide by during exam sessions of their own and others.
- iii. We expect our students to also act professionally and courteously towards their fellow students. Being inclusive and friendly to all. The teachers will do their best to encourage this behaviour, but we also ask our students to do their best in this regard.
- iv. If a student is acting in an unprofessional or general unacceptable manner, they will be asked to leave the classroom and be brought back in the class at the teacher's discretion if at all depending on the behaviour. If it is a serious/recurring case, we will contact the parent directly.

B) Teachers

- i. Our teachers are fully qualified and trained through the ISTD and the RAD and know how to deal with all teaching aspects regarding the students, their education and even their body developments throughout puberty and are trained to spot developing body issues including muscular imbalances and more.
- ii. The teachers will use hands on teaching methods where required as dancing is a physical sport. It sometimes requires physical manipulation for the student to truly understand what they are required to do.
- iii. The teachers are experienced with years of training and teaching and are very capable members of our team. We have full confidence and support in them, but if you have any queries feel free to speak directly to Miss Nicola.

C) Parents/Customers

- i. We expect our parents/customers to set an example for our students with their behaviour in the school. We are happy to deal with any and all queries of all kinds and if a private meeting is required then we are happy to oblige. We do not accept any unruly or rude behaviour in our school from students or parents and you will be asked to leave if we feel your behaviour becomes this way inclined.
- ii. It is hard to find time between classes for queries even small ones, so we ask that parents try to ask their question through social media or wait till we are available, as sometimes even the smallest questions eat into class time and this affects the students learning.
- iii. We expect a professional courtesy from all customers in paying their fees on time, as stated previously any error in doing so will incur a first and final warning. We are always open to communication and opening a dialogue in payment issues, but we ask that you respect that the school is business and rules are meant to be adhered to.

7. Health and Safety

A) Maintenance

- i. We try to maintain the cleanliness of the school through weekly cleaning, any issues or faulty equipment found please let us know immediately so we can address them ASAP.

B) First Aid

- i. All our teachers and staff are first aid trained and prepared to deal with almost every minor situation that arises. If a major incident occurs, we are obliged to immediately call the emergency services and then notify the parent of the incident and the following events.
- ii. Our first aid station is located at reception and is always fully stocked. Please let us know of any allergies or conditions your child might have so when a first aid incident occurs, we have all the information to effectively provide the correct aid for your child.

C) Fire Procedures

- i. In the event of a fire the evacuation point is the car park. All the teachers know the evacuation routes, the procedures and will oversee the safety of your children. If you attempt to re-enter the building or move to locate your child, you will be directed out of the building by the nearest member of staff to wait in the car park where your child will be moving to either via the main entrance or via the fire escape at the side of the building.

8. Child Protection

A) Qualifications

- i. All our teachers are qualified through the dance examination boards the ISTD and the RAD. Our teachers have years of experience in teaching dance and even counselling students.

B) Bullying Policy

- i. We have a strict no bullying policy, any issues in this regard need to be brought to the attention of the class teacher and the principal Miss Nicola immediately. We pride ourselves on being a friendly family-based dance school and wish all the children to have a wonderful time with us during class and in the breaks.

9. Festivals

A) Breakdown

We have now started participating in festival competitions. Anyone can join in with these competitive dances, and we suggest that they start with the group dances to get a feel for what this experience is like. As it is a competition it is a much different atmosphere and experience for the students. Almost a glimpse into the career they could potentially have in dance if they wished.

We always want the students to enjoy themselves, but they will be required to work hard as a team member or even as a soloist. Miss Liv oversees festival entries and is happy to discuss all options with you. But please know that not every child is meant for festival competition or at least not every child has the ability to win medals, but we hope that partaking and enjoying the experience is enjoyed by all.

B) Payments

- i. All festival payments are made in cash directly to the festival teacher, NOT to reception. Lessons are pay as you go and are expected to be paid before or immediately after the class. If lessons go unpaid, lessons will stop until all festival classes have been paid and up to date.
- ii. Lessons can be paid in advance in multiple blocks or in whole half terms/terms if easier to keep on top of.

- iii. There are payments needs for lessons, competition entries and sometimes festival costumes if rented or bought via the dance school.

C) Attendance

- i. Lessons are to be paid for in advance. This doesn't change due to absence. Unless you have notified the teacher with at least 3 days advance notice so they can rearrange a lesson for the slot. Unknown or unexplained absences will still need to be paid for.

D) Festival Costumes

- i. Costumes can be rented from Carmichaels for a small fee. Costumes can be bought through Carmichaels, with payment going to Carmichaels. Or you can purchase your own costumes through your own means.
- ii. Group costumes are provided for by Carmichaels and no fee is required.

10. Events and Performances

A) Where to look + Taking Part

- i. Most of our events and performances are advertised on our social media (usually through the school's or Miss Liv's teacher profile), on our notice board in reception, on our website and talked about with the students.
- ii. There are events that are open to everyone, some that have specific needs/requirements like age or grade level.
- iii. There are events and performances that take place in our studio, in our town or sometimes even further a field like London. Please note down as much of the information we provide about these events and performances and make sure you and your child can commit to all requirements.
- iv. Sometimes these events or performances will require external teachers or external rehearsals and therefore on occasion extra rehearsal or participation fees are required to be paid.
- v. We try to be involved in as many events and performances as we can manage with our already busy schedules, if there are events or performances you think we would be interested in joining please contact the school or Miss Liv directly.

B) Behaviour

- i. On these events and performances, we expect the children and their parents who are attending either as spectators or assistant chaperones to behave with a professional manner. Including timely arrivals, commitment to rehearsals and self-practice, and behaving with impeccable manners.

11. GDPR and Photo Permissions

A) Photos + Videos

- i. In our new student contact form, we ask if we have your permission to use photos and videos of your child's for publicity purposes to advertise the school. If you agree to this on the form, we take this permission to use your child's image. There will be times we will remind you of this permission and reconfirm if it is acceptable to you.
- ii. Photos will be sometimes be taken in class, in rehearsal, at performances and events for the use of the school for advertisements, social media, decoration of the studios or instruction.
- iii. If you do have issue with any image of your child, please let us know immediately and we will try to resolve the matter.

B) Social Media + Advertisements

- i. We try to use our Facebook page, Instagram profile and our Website to correctly advertise all about the school, our updates and our current events and changes and we attempt to keep them all as up to date as we can.
- ii. There may be times some items are out of date, please inform us so we can correct these incidents.
- iii. The pictures and videos chosen to advertise are chosen either at random or for a specific purpose by us when posting on social media. Most of the time we use public images from the internet, however on occasion we like to use our own students to advertise things.