



## Parent Handbook 2018-19

*Classes Begin Monday, September 10<sup>th</sup>!*

*Welcome to the Rachel Park Dance Center!* We're so happy you are joining us as we celebrate our **26<sup>th</sup> year!** This handbook will serve as your guide to the Dance Center and its philosophy of dance education.

### **Philosophy**

The Rachel Park Dance Center's philosophy is to recognize, encourage and develop every student, instilling a positive self-image, a sense of discipline and an appreciation of dance as an art form. We are committed to providing high-quality dance training to every student who passes through our doors. We provide a safe and child-centered environment to encourage our students to explore dance with qualified, nurturing teachers.

The highest educational standards are expected from all Rachel Park Dance Center faculty members. They continue to educate themselves through certification programs, teacher-training, conferences, master classes, performing and other learning opportunities. Our team of instructors have extensive experience knowledge in working with children of all ages. Many are college graduates and hold degrees in the arts. Others are college students and former students who have graduated from our teacher assistant training program. They are motivated by their love of dance and the passion to transfer their knowledge and skills to others, so their creativity and talent can shine.

### **ABOUT THIS HANDBOOK**

For 25 years the Rachel Park Dance Center has been providing quality dance training. We believe that our success comes as a result of providing solid training and quality service, as well as maintaining a professional, yet family-friendly atmosphere. We have created this handbook to offer our students and their parents a clear understanding of their commitments and responsibility to the dance center.

➤ Dates and/or expenses listed in this handbook are subject to change. Please check the website and your email for updates.



### **Key contact information for the Rachel Park Dance Center:**

Mailing Address: P.O. Box 694, Middleboro, MA 02346

Phone: 508-946-2380

Email: [info@rachelparkdance.com](mailto:info@rachelparkdance.com)

Website: [www.rachelparkdance.com](http://www.rachelparkdance.com)

### **Key event dates for the Rachel Park Dance Center:**

Monday, September 10<sup>th</sup> - 1<sup>st</sup> day of classes

Saturday, November 24<sup>th</sup> – Middleboro Christmas Parade

Saturday, May 25<sup>th</sup> - Recital Dress Rehearsal \**Tentative Date*

Sunday, May 26<sup>th</sup> - Annual Recital \**Tentative Date*

### **Rachel Park Dance Center Closure Dates:**

Columbus Day – Monday, October 8<sup>th</sup>

Halloween – Wednesday, October 31<sup>st</sup>

Thanksgiving Break – Wednesday, November 21<sup>st</sup> through Saturday, November 24<sup>th</sup>

Christmas Break – Saturday, December 22<sup>nd</sup> through Tuesday, January 1<sup>st</sup>

Winter Break – Monday, February 18<sup>th</sup> through Saturday, February 23<sup>rd</sup>

Spring break – Monday, April 15<sup>th</sup> through Saturday, April 20<sup>th</sup>

### **Understanding Dance Education**

As a parent, you play an important role in supporting your student financially, but your emotional support is of equal—and perhaps even greater—value. Encourage your child to be the best that he or she can be regardless of what others may achieve. Dance is an individual art form and children need to be allowed to achieve at a pace that's comfortable. No two students will progress at the same rate, even if they experience the exact same training. It's important to encourage children to focus on themselves, give their all, and be satisfied with their own accomplishments.

Not all children will develop into professional dancers. One of the primary goals of our faculty is to teach life lessons and skills that offer children the best chance for success. Dance education encompasses far more than technique and the steps your children learn.



We believe the discipline of dance training gives young people a better understanding of commitment through learning, experiencing the spirit of teamwork, and discovering what they can accomplish through hard work.

You play an important role in supporting your student financially, but your emotional support is of equal—and perhaps even greater—value.

### **Class Placement**

The school faculty meets regularly to discuss the students' progress and/or placement. It is our policy to offer appropriate opportunities to every child.

Placement decisions are derived from many years of teaching experience. Often a child is placed in a particular group or class where he or she will feel confident, in order to promote the development of self-esteem. Some students who are placed in a higher level become discouraged, only to lose their passion for dance. Others respond to the challenge of being in a class with students who are more proficient by pushing themselves to work harder. Placement is highly individual and the factors that go into the decision are complex.

### **Classroom Observation**

During our designated “class observation weeks”, parents may observe classes through our viewing windows located in the hallway outside of each classroom.

Class observations take place during the first week of the following months: October, November, December, February, March & April. This is a great chance for you to see firsthand what the classroom experience is like for your child and what they have been learning. It also provides insight into what your child may need to work on at home.

Never disrupt class. During observation weeks (or at any time if the door to the classroom is open), please refrain from shouting instructions or distracting your child in any way.

### **Medical Information**

Parents must notify the director/and or teachers regarding children who use an inhaler or who may require medications during their time at the Rachel Park Dance Center. It is also important to inform the director and/or teachers about your child's existing medical conditions or learning disabilities at the time of registration and throughout the school year. Our teachers are trained professionals who are anxious to work with all children and



personalities, and the more we know about your child, the better the dance experience will be for all involved. All information about our students is confidential.

### **Dos and Don'ts**

Some parents may compare their child's progress or class placement to another child's. Watch for this behavior in your children as well and encourage them to focus instead on their own accomplishments.

If you have questions or concerns about your child's dance education (such as progress or class placement), please discuss them with your child's teacher or the director. Talking only to other parents can lead to misinformation and confusion. Please contact the school office to set up an appointment; do not approach your child's teacher or the director between or during classes or make contact outside of the school.

If you do request a conference, please listen carefully to what your child's teachers have to say. They spend a significant amount of time with your child and offer expertise in the field of dance education.

Class placement of students is highly individual and the factors that go into the decision are complex.
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### **STAYING INFORMED**

We work hard to make the dance experience organized and fun. Keeping you informed is one of our primary goals. Please read all newsletters and other school information.

Newsletters and important updates are printed and posted on the bulletin boards located in the waiting room and copies are available in the office. The same newsletters and updates are emailed to you and posted on the Rachel Park Dance Center website.

If you have any questions regarding the information distributed, we encourage you to contact the office at 508-946-2380 between the hours 4:45pm-8:30pm (Tues) 5:00pm-7:45pm (Wed) 5:00-8:00pm (Thurs) 5:00pm-6:30pm (Fri) and 9:00am-11:30am on Saturday. Hours vary on Monday (please call)

We do our best to answer email daily, except on weekends. Feel free to email questions to the office at [info@rachelparkdance.com](mailto:info@rachelparkdance.com)



**Website** [www.rachelparkdance.com](http://www.rachelparkdance.com)

We are constantly updating our website. News, important parent and student information, contact information, and more are available online 24 hours a day.

**Facebook Page** [www.facebook.com/rachelparkdancecenter](http://www.facebook.com/rachelparkdancecenter)

“Like” the Rachel Park Dance Center page on Facebook to receive updates on school events. Please invite your family and friends to “like” the dance center.

Please do not post questions on the dance center’s Facebook page. Instead, please email them directly to [info@rachelparkdance.com](mailto:info@rachelparkdance.com)

### **Weather Cancellations**

School closures due to severe weather conditions will be announced by 8am (for morning classes) and by 3pm (for afternoon & evening classes.) Notifications of weather cancellations will be emailed, posted on the website & Facebook page, and announced on the dance center’s outgoing voicemail message.

### **Dress Code Requirements**

The Rachel Park Dance Center maintains a dress code to encourage concentration and a sense of inclusiveness (variations in attire can be distracting and contribute to feelings of inequality). Uniformity in dancewear allows the teachers to assess how well the students are implementing the technique being taught, problems with alignment, and other important aspects of dance training.

- Students should carry their dancewear, shoes, and other belongings in a dance bag. Please print your child’s name on the bag as well as on all of its contents.
- Watches, jewelry and baggy clothing should not be worn to class.
- Dance shoes should never be worn outside.
- Female students should wear their hair tightly secured in a neat ponytail or bun.



<b>Class</b>	<b>Boys</b>	<b>Girls</b>
Preschool	Black sweatpants or shorts, white T-shirt, black ballet shoes, black tap shoes.	Pink leotard, pink footed tights, pink leather ballet shoes, black patent buckle tap shoes.
Ballet (Primary–Senior Level)	Black sweatpants or shorts, white T-shirt, black ballet shoes.	Black leotard, pink footed or convertible tights, pink split-sole ballet shoes. (Please speak with instructor if pointe shoes are required.)
Jazz	Black sweatpants or shorts, white T-shirt, black jazz shoes.	Black leotard; black or pink tights; suntan stretch jazz boots.
Tap	Black sweatpants or shorts, white T-shirt, black tap shoes.	Black leotard; black or pink tights; tan u-shell tap shoes (Primary-Int Level) black premium jazz/tap shoe (JrSr Level)
Modern	Black sweatpants or shorts, white T-shirt, tan foot undeez or sole shields.	Black leotard, black footless or convertible tights, tan foot undeez or sole shields.
Hip-Hop	Comfortable plain-colored clothing (t-shirts/sweats) and black sneakers.	Comfortable plain-colored clothing (t-shirts/sweats) and black sneakers.
Acro	Fitted shirts and fitted shorts, bare feet.	Black leotard, pink or tan footless tights or black bike shorts, bare feet.
Musical Theater	Black sweatpants or shorts, white t-shirt, black jazz shoes.	Black leotard, black or pink tights; suntan stretch jazz boots.
Lyrical	Black sweatpants or shorts, white t-shirt, tan foot undeez or sole shields.	Black leotard, black or pink footless or convertible tights, tan foot undeez or sole shields.



**Discount Dancewear and Shoe Packages**

The Rachel Park Dance Center makes it easy for parents and students with “all you’ll need” packages. A dance bag with the Rachel Park Dance Center logo on it contains everything students need to begin their journey into the wonderful world of dance.

<b>Class/level</b>	<b>Cost</b>	<b>What’s included</b>
Preschool	\$70	Pink tank leotard and pair of pink footed tights
Primary	\$80	Black tank leotard and pair of pink footed tights, ballet and tap shoes
Elementary-Intermediate	\$115	Black tank leotard and pair of pink footed tights, ballet, tap and jazz shoes
Junior-Senior	\$150	Black tank leotard and pair of pink footed tights, ballet, tap and jazz shoes



### Discount Dancewear and Shoes (Individual)

The Rachel Park Dance Center also offers dancewear and shoes for individual purchase at any time during the school year.

Item	Child	Adult
Footed Tights	\$9	\$10
Convertible Tights	\$11	\$13
Footless Tights	\$11	\$13
Short-sleeve Leotard	\$19	\$21
Tank Leotard	\$18	\$20
Camisole Leotard	\$19	\$21
Rhinestone Crisscross Back Leotard	\$23	\$25
Black Dance Shorts	\$13	\$14
Skirted Short-Sleeve Leotard	\$25	NA
Pull-On Dance Skirt	\$13	NA
Pink split-sole ballet shoes	\$27	\$27
Tan stretch jazz boots	\$38	\$38
Black patent slip-on tap shoes	\$22	NA
Girls tan u-shell tap shoes	\$28	\$28
Girls black premium jazz/tap shoes	\$56	\$56
Boys tap shoes	*Special Order	*Special Order
Black Hip-Hop Sneakers	\$50	\$50
Tan sole shields	\$18	\$18

### Registration Fee

An annual registration fee of \$25/student \$30/family reserves your spot in class and covers the cost of mailings, insurance, handbooks, rehearsals, and so on. Registration fees are not refundable with the exception of preschool students who are determined to be



unready for dance and may receive a credit for the following season. Registration fee and first month's tuition is due at time of registration.

### **Tuition and Expense Policy**

First month's tuition is due at time of registration. Thereafter, full monthly tuition is due by the 15th of each month. We will accept cash, checks, or money orders for tuition payment. Please write your child's name & class in the memo portion of the check. If you pay with cash, please ask for a receipt. Payments may also be made online via PayPal at [app.thestudiodirector.com/rachelsdancers/portal.sd](http://app.thestudiodirector.com/rachelsdancers/portal.sd) (5% processing fee will be assessed). You may also go to our website [www.rachelparkdance.com](http://www.rachelparkdance.com). Go to the "enroll" page and click on "access your account and pay on-line". Tuition payments made after the 15<sup>th</sup> of the month must include a \$10 late fee. If tuition is not paid by the 30<sup>th</sup> of the month, you may be asked to keep your child home until you are able to bring your account up to date. There will be a \$25 service charge for all returned checks and a \$10 service charge for any check that the bank has to redeposit.

We offer a 5% discount on annual tuition that is paid in full by September 15, 2018. We also offer multiple class discounts (see below).

Please note: tuition is based on the season regardless of how many weeks are in a given month. Tuition payments average out to four classes each month. All tuition payments are non-refundable.

<b>Class Length</b>	<b>Rate</b>
½ hour	\$45/month
¾ hour	\$52/month
1 hour	\$56/month
1 ½ hour	\$75/month
<b><i>Multiple Class Discounts</i></b>	
1 <sup>st</sup> class at regular price	
\$10 off 2 <sup>nd</sup> class	
\$5 off each successive class	

### **Additional Fees**

Tuition does not include the registration fee, dancewear, shoes, costumes, recital tights, recital tickets, recital DVD, private lessons, jackets or special events.



## **Discipline Policy**

In order to maintain a happy, healthy, professional environment, students are taught the importance of being a part of the group. We encourage students to have respect for other students, the teachers and staff, and studio property, and we foster the development of good habits and compliance with rules of conduct.

Our staff and faculty are trained to use constructive techniques of discipline to maintain class control and handle individual misbehavior.

- Students who exhibit unacceptable behavior or attitudes are told what is wrong and directed to a positive alternative approach or behavior.
- If a student strikes another student, the two are respectfully separated and each is asked to explain what happened. They are then asked to help solve the problem, talk to each other, and reconcile with one another.
- Students who are disruptive will be respectfully asked to stop the behavior. If the behavior is repeated, they will be reminded of it and told how it affects others. If the disruption continues, the students involved will be asked to sit down for a short period of time (usually three to five minutes) before rejoining the class. If a student's misbehavior continues to disrupt the class, the parent or guardian will be called to pick him/her up.

## **Termination of Enrollment**

In certain circumstances, when it is in the best interest of one or more students, it may be necessary for the school owner/director to terminate a student's enrollment. Every effort will be made to correct a problematic situation before terminating enrollment. Reasons for termination of enrollment include the following:

- Disruptive or dangerous behavior by students or their parents
- Abuse of other children, staff, or property
- Inability of the Rachel Park Dance Center to meet the child's needs

## **Arrival and Departure**

We encourage students to arrive 10-15 minutes before class starts. For their safety, children under age 10 should be picked up immediately after class. Students ages 10 and older must be picked up no more than 15 minutes after their class is completed.



## **Attendance**

All students are expected to attend their regularly scheduled classes. Each class offers a step forward in the educational process. A missed class could leave a child one step behind the other students. During the months of January through May, choreography for the recital will be taught and rehearsed. It is important for children to feel completely confident with the choreography and the year-end performance. Missing class during this period could result in frustration for the students and their teachers and classmates.

## **Tardiness**

Dance is a physical activity that requires the body to be warmed up in order to execute movement safely. Late students miss the proper warm-up and/or barre and therefore may sustain injury. Students who arrive more than 10 minutes late may be asked to observe class for reasons of personal safety.

## **Class Visitors**

Safety issues and legal responsibilities make it impossible for us to allow students to bring visitors into the classroom. Students should not invite siblings, other relatives, or friends to their classes with the exception of special events such as "Bring a Friend Week" and in-school performances.

## **Makeup Classes**

Students who miss a class will have the opportunity to make it up with another similar class. Please check with the office to determine the best makeup class for your child.

## **Lost and Found**

Please mark all dancewear, shoes, and personal items with your child's name. We will make every effort to locate and return lost items; however, we cannot be responsible for any items that your child brings to class.

## **Illness**

Colds, flu, and other contagious diseases occur frequently and spread easily among children. To help protect your own child's health and to minimize the possibility of contagion at school, please keep your child at home.



If symptoms of illness deemed contagious are observed in your child during a class, you will be called to pick up your child immediately.

When your child has a fever, please keep him/her at home until the temperature returns to normal. If there are any lingering signs of illness, such as glassy or watery eyes, listlessness, and drowsiness, please keep your child at home. This will help to ensure that the illness has passed and that your child will be well enough to resume class activities the following week.

### **Parking Lot Safety**

There is parking in back of the Dance Center as well as limited curb-side parking. Please use caution when entering and exiting the parking lot. Please do not allow children to play in or around parking areas. If you are parking at the curb outside the Dance Center please remember that it is illegal to park directly in front of the Dance Center, even if you are in your car. Police do take notice. Please do not park directly behind Lindo's Pizza. Those spaces are specifically reserved for them.

### **Student and Parent Use of Social Media**

Use of Facebook, Twitter, LinkedIn, blogging, and other online social-media vehicles is commonplace. This policy is intended to provide the Rachel Park Dance Center students and parents with guidelines to eliminate any confusion concerning the use of social media.

- You DO NOT have permission to reveal any information that compromises the Rachel Park Dance Center. By that we mean you are forbidden to share personal information about the director, other students or their families, or anything that is proprietary and/or confidential to them or the Rachel Park Dance Center.
- Students and parents should neither claim nor imply that they are speaking on behalf of the Rachel Park Dance Center.
- Never post anything that could compromise the self-esteem of students who attend the Rachel Park Dance Center.
- If you post videos of class or rehearsals, don't post any choreography in its entirety; the Rachel Park Dance Center owns the copyright to all choreography taught at the school.
- Respect the law, including those laws governing defamation, discrimination, harassment, and copyright and fair use. As stated in this handbook, parents and students should never post negative comments about other schools or teachers.



Also, please do not post negative comments about school activities such as competitions, conventions, and performances or about the directors of those events.

- Ensure that your social networking conduct is consistent with all of the policies contained in this handbook.

## **General Policies**

- Parent and students should not enter the office space of the school. Please feel free to communicate through the glass windows of the office.
- Use of the school phone is limited to emergencies only.
- Parents and students should never interrupt a class in session.
- Only water is allowed in the studios. No food, drinks, or gum.
- We love babies and young children and appreciate the chance to meet our students' siblings. However, our priority is the safety of every child on the school premises. Children must be supervised at all times and are not free to run around the lobby or classroom areas.
- Please do not dispose of dirty diapers inside the school. Large trash cans outside the studio are better suited for such disposal.
- No cell phones, ipods or other electronic devices may be used during class time. (This means no emailing, Internet use, or text messaging.)

**Students and parents are restricted from contacting teachers by phone, email, text messages, etc. All communication with teachers must go through the Rachel Park Dance Center office. Please direct all email correspondence to [info@rachelparkdance.com](mailto:info@rachelparkdance.com)**

- Never speak negatively about teachers, students, or parents from other schools.
- All students must show respect for their teachers at all times. Inappropriate behavior could result in dismissal from the school.



## **Annual Recital**

Dress rehearsal: Saturday, May 25<sup>th</sup> (*tentative date*)

Recital: Sunday, May 26<sup>th</sup> (*tentative date*)

All students participate in our annual recital to be held at (TBD) on Sunday, May 26<sup>th</sup> (*tentative date*). Dress rehearsal is tentatively scheduled for Saturday, May 25<sup>th</sup> (*tentative date*). Please note that all students must participate in the dress rehearsal in order to perform in the recital. There are no exceptions to this policy.

The recital offers our students a professionally directed performance that allows them to present to their families and friends the results of a year's hard work, dedication, and progress. Preschool students perform one time in the annual recital. All other students perform one time in each of the styles of dance they are registered for.

A big part of dance training includes learning through performance. Although performance opportunities can help prepare some students for a possible career in dance, they also contribute to children's success in non-dance activities. The experience helps build self-esteem and confidence, which can result in better in-school presentations, improved social skills, and strong college and job interview skills. The rehearsal process is a tremendous learning experience as well. It helps the children develop retention skills, and by working with their classmates on a group performance, they learn the positive aspects of working as a team to create the best end result.

### **Recital Handbook**

In March-April we distribute a recital handbook with all the information parents and students need to know to make the recital experience enjoyable for all.

### **Costumes**

We spend many hours determining the correct costumes for each class. They are always age appropriate and of the highest quality possible. Preschool students will need one costume; all other students will need one costume for each dance form they train in. Costumes include all accessories (hats, gloves, hairpieces, etc.), but do not include tights or shoes.

In an effort to ensure that costumes are delivered in time for school photographs and an organized distribution to our students, costume orders are placed during the December



holiday break. Costume manufacturers do not accept cancellations or offer refunds; therefore the dance center does not refund costume deposits.

### Costume Payment Schedule

Class/Level	October 15	November 15	December 15
Pre-School - Primary (\$67/per)	\$25	\$25	\$17
Elementary-Intermediate (\$72/per)	\$30	\$25	\$17
Junior - Senior (\$77/per)	\$30	\$25	\$22

Costumes will not be ordered until they are paid for in full. Parents or guardians accept full responsibility for all expenses, including surcharges and postage for costumes that are ordered late. A late fee of \$10 will be added to costume payments made after December 21<sup>st</sup>. The Rachel Park Dance Center is not responsible if costumes are not received in time for the recital due to late payments. Costume payments are the sole responsibility of the parent or guardian.

Costumes are always age appropriate and of the highest quality possible.

### Recital Tickets

Tickets for the annual recital will go on sale at the Rachel Park Dance Center on Saturday, May 4<sup>th</sup> from 9:00am-12:00pm. Tickets are general admission and the performance is reserved seating. ***\*No refunds on recital tickets\****

After Saturday, May 4<sup>th</sup> tickets will be available for purchase in the Dance Center office during regular business hours.

No one is admitted to the recital without a ticket. Infants and children who may have a hard time remaining seated during the entire performance should not attend.

### Recital Photos

Junior, Senior Classes & all Competition Team photos will be taken on Saturday, May 12<sup>th</sup> at the Rachel Park Dance Center. **Dates and times are subject to change.** Please confirm your child's time on the updated schedule to be distributed the week of April 22<sup>nd</sup>. All students are required to be present for their class picture. There are no exceptions. *\*Pre-School, Primary, Elementary & Intermediate Level Class photos will be taken at dress rehearsal. Dates and times are subject to change.*



After the group photo shoot, students may choose to have solo portraits made in any or all of their costumes. There is no obligation to purchase photos. Please arrive at least half an hour before your child's scheduled time since photo shoots tend to run ahead of schedule.

### Important Recital Dates

When registering your child at Rachel Park Dance Center, you commit yourself and/or your child to the following dates and events.

Date	Activity	Location
October 15	Costume deposit #1	At RPDC
November 15	Costume deposit #2	At RPDC
December 15	Costume deposit #3	At RPDC
May 4 <sup>th</sup>	Recital tickets go on sale	At RPDC
May 11 <sup>th</sup> ( <i>tentative</i> )	Recital photo shoot (Jr, Sr Classes & Comp Teams)	At RPDC
May 25 <sup>th</sup> ( <i>tentative</i> )	Recital photo shoot (Pre-Sch, Primary, Elem & Int Classes)	TBD
May 25 <sup>th</sup> ( <i>tentative</i> )	Dress rehearsal	TBD
May 26 <sup>th</sup> ( <i>tentative</i> )	Recital	TBD

## ADDITIONAL INFORMATION AND ACTIVITIES

### Bring-a-Friend Week

The last week of September is "Bring-a-Friend Week." Students may bring a friend (similar in age) to the school to experience a fun class designed for them and their guests. Students' friends attend class free of charge during this week; however, they must sign-up 1 week in advance.

### Summer Program and Camps

Each summer the Rachel Park Dance Center offers summer programs for both current and new students. Summer classes are for students ages 3 to 18. Flyers and on-line registration for all summer programs will be available in April.



## **Studio Rental**

The studios are available for rental for meetings, rehearsals, birthday parties and other activities. Tables, chairs, sound systems are available. Whether you're planning a onetime, weekly, or monthly event, please email [info@rachelparkdance.com](mailto:info@rachelparkdance.com) to determine whether we can accommodate your group or activity.

## **A FINAL NOTE**

WELCOME TO THE RACHEL PARK DANCE CENTER! We look forward to an exciting year! If you ever have any questions or concerns, please don't hesitate to contact the office at 508-946-2380 or [info@rachelparkdance.com](mailto:info@rachelparkdance.com)