

Valley DANCE Theatre

Welcome Packet &

Parent Handbook

The essential guide for you and your dancer

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Table of Contents

[Welcome Letter](#)

[Children's Division Classes](#)

[Company Division Classes](#)

[Registration](#)

[Tuition Policies](#)

[Communication](#)

[Dress Code](#)

[School Rules](#)

[Ballet Etiquette](#)

[Hold Harmless Agreement/Release Waiver](#)



Welcome Letter

Welcome! Thank you for your interest in Valley Dance Theatre.

Valley Dance Theatre has been providing exceptional ballet instruction and productions to the Tri-Valley region for over 35 years. Valley Dance Theatre is a non-profit ballet school and company. Our goal is to provide performance opportunities for talented local dancers and bring affordable, quality dance performances to the Tri-Valley area.

Valley Dance Theatre consists of two closely related organizations:

- **Valley Dance Theatre's Company** is the resident Ballet Company at the Bankhead Theater and presents two professionally staged productions each year. In December, Valley Dance Theatre's Company, accompanied by the **Valley Dance Theatre Pit Orchestra**, presents a full-length version of the holiday classic "The Nutcracker". In the spring, the Company presents its family-friendly "Spring Rep", which showcases the joy of dance through excerpts from the grand ballets together with new works from local choreographers.

One of the unique aspects of our Company is the costumes. Our dancers wear beautiful, one of a kind costumes created in-house by a team led by our Artistic Director, Betsy Hausburg.

- **The School of the Valley Dance Theatre** provides exceptional dance education to students of all ages and levels of training. The focus of our curriculum is classical ballet, but we also provide opportunities to learn partnering, modern dance, character dance, contemporary dance, and choreography. We strive to provide a wholesome, well-balanced dance experience. Our classes, taught by experienced instructors, are kept as small as possible to provide individualized attention. The School of the Valley Dance Theatre does not participate in competitions or recitals. However, each Spring in conjunction with the Company's performance of Spring Rep, students in levels Ballet III and below have the opportunity to perform in a school demonstration showcase for family and friends at the Bankhead Theater.

We encourage you to find out more about Valley Dance Theatre by exploring our web site at:

www.valleydancetheatre.com

If you have any questions, please contact Valley Dance Theatre at
925-243-0925 or office@valleydancetheatre.com

Children's Division Classes

The School of the Valley Dance Theatre offers a variety of year-round programs in our Children's Division. Our highly experienced and creative instructors make it fun to learn the basics of classical ballet. Students enrolled in the Children's Division perform an annual showcase in the spring and are invited to audition for children's parts in the Company's Nutcracker productions.

Discover Dance

This class is for children ages 2.5-5 years whether or not they are beginners or have taken prior ballet classes. Children are taught the basics of movement, rhythm, and motor development skills in a fun and developmentally appropriate environment. Students are taught how to follow direction, engage in music, use their imagination, and express themselves through the art of dance. Advancement to pre-ballet is at the recommendation of the instructor.

Pre-Ballet

This class is for students ages 6-7 whether or not they are beginners or have taken prior ballet classes. Children are taught basics of ballet terminology (plie, tendu, balance, chasses, etc.), body alignment, and proper ballet class behavior. Rhythm, musicality, flexibility, and discipline are introduced. Advancement to Ballet I is at the recommendation of the instructor.

Ballet I

This class is for beginning students ages 8 and above OR for students who may be younger than 8, but have had at least one year of Pre-Ballet and have been advanced by their Pre-Ballet instructor. Students move more quickly beyond the basics and begin learning more difficult ballet movements. Proper class etiquette and attire are required. Strength and balance are emphasized along with proper placement to prepare them for more complicated dance step combinations. Students recommended by their Ballet I instructor for consideration to advance to Ballet II are required to pass a Placement Class.

Ballet I (For Boys)

This class is for beginning boys ages 8 -13 OR for boys who may be younger than 8, but have had at least one year of Pre-Ballet and have been advanced by their Pre-Ballet instructor. Boys who are under age 8 and are beginners are encouraged to enroll in our Discover Dance or Pre-Ballet classes. Students in this class will move more quickly beyond the basics and begin learning more difficult ballet movements. Proper class etiquette and attire are required. Strength, stretch and balance are emphasized along with proper placement to prepare them for more complicated dance step combinations and as preparation to begin partnering class. All of Valley Dance Theatre's classes at all levels are open to boys and young men as long as they meet the age and readiness criteria.

Ballet I (For Teens and Adults)

This class is for beginning male and female students ages 13 and above. Students in this class will move quickly beyond the basics and begin learning more difficult ballet movements. Proper class etiquette and attire are required. Strength, stretch and balance are emphasized along with proper placement to prepare them for more complicated dance step combinations. This class may also be used by **all level** students ages 13 and above as a make up class.

Ballet II

Developing quality of movement begins. Students begin to experience the art of dance, and learn the commitment required to excel. Students begin to demonstrate maturity in their movement, dedication, strength, technique and proper body alignment to prepare them for pointe. Two classes per week are recommended at this level. Students recommended by their Ballet II instructor for consideration to advance to Ballet III are required to pass a Placement Class.

Ballet III

Pointe work begins at this level when students demonstrate sufficient maturity, dedication, strength, technique and proper body alignment. The instructors will notify students when they are eligible to purchase toe shoes and begin to wear them in class (Mondays). Students in this level are required to take three classes per week (Mondays, Wednesdays and Saturdays). Wednesday and Saturday's classes are taught in ballet slippers. The Ballet I for Teens and Adults class may be used as a make up class. Students at this level are notified by the Director when they are ready to move to Ballet IV.

Company Division Classes

The Company Division offers year-round classes focused on a dancer's development and progression toward becoming a member of the Valley Dance Theatre's Company. At this level, dancers are expected to audition for both The Nutcracker and Spring Rep productions. The Valley Dance Theatre Director places students in the Company Division Classes, based on their skill and level of training. New students who would like to participate in Company Division Classes must complete a placement evaluation with the Director prior to registering for classes.

Ballet IV

Pointe work continues at this level and increases in complexity and technical difficulty. Students in Ballet IV level are required to take a minimum of three ballet classes per week which includes one pointe class and two technique classes. The Ballet I for Teens and Adults class may be used as a make up class. Students at this level are notified by the Director when they are ready to move to Ballet V.

Ballet V

Pointe work and technical development continues in preparation for advancement to the Company. This level requires a significant time commitment, as dancers at this level may perform more serious roles in Company productions. Students may be invited to join beginning Partnering class at this level. Students in Ballet V Pointe class are required to take a minimum of three ballet classes per week which includes one pointe class and two technique classes. The Ballet I for Teens and Adults class may be used as a make up class. Students at this level are notified by the Director when they are ready to move to Company.

Company

Significant movement quality and understanding of proper placement and alignment are required. Technical ability, strong work ethic, self-motivation, and self-discipline are also required. Advanced technique and pointe work continue. Performance quality and partnering skills are refined. Students in Company Pointe class are required to take a minimum of three ballet classes per week which includes one pointe class and two technique classes.

Beginning Partnering

The class is to prepare dancers, both male and female, for the classical "pas de deux" work that classical ballet is so famous for. Beginning Partnering is for Ballet V students that have not had prior partnering experience. Instructor recommendation is necessary.

Advanced Partnering

Advanced Partnering is for Company dancers that have had at least some Beginning Partnering or pas de deux experience. They must have a strong recommendation from either of the two directors of the Valley Dance Theatre to participate in the Advanced Partnering class.

Registration

Valley Dance Theatre has two school sessions each year. The first is the Fall / Spring Session that runs from September – May, similar to a regular school year. The second session is the Summer Sessions with dates varying from year to year, but usually in June, July and August.

WHEN A STUDENT ENROLLS IN A CLASS OR CLASSES AT VDT, THE STUDENT IS MAKING A COMMITMENT TO COMPLETE THAT SESSION. Once classes have begun, tuition is not refundable. Attendance is important and the student / family is making the financial commitment to pay registration fees and the tuition for the ENTIRE session.

Registration holds your child's place in the class for the entire duration of the year. You are purchasing a **reserved place in class** rather than the number of classes per month. A student may make up a class by taking other classes at the appropriate level or with the instructor's approval. Please contact the office for approval before taking a make-up class.

To register please go to www.valleydancetheatre.com Click on "Ballet School" in the top horizontal column, and choose "click here to register for classes" at the bottom of the page. You will be taken to *The Studio Director*, our student database. Please fill out the appropriate information.

Each family is charged a NON-REFUNDABLE registration fee of \$30.00 per year. Paying this fee and registering for class guarantees your student a place in class. You are ALSO agreeing to pay the **ENTIRE tuition amount** for the session.

Tuition Policies

Tuition is due upon enrollment at VDT. Tuition can be paid in one lump sum at the beginning of the session or may be split into payments for certain class levels. Please contact the office to arrange a payment plan. Payments plans are subject to change year to year and additional administrative fees are added to the entire tuition to cover costs.

Registration Fee: There is a **NON-REFUNDABLE \$30.00 registration fee per family** each year and due upon enrollment at VDT.

Returned Check Policy: There is a \$30.00 fee for any returned checks.

Family Discount: Family discounts are available to families with more than one child attending class. Families with two to three students will receive a 5% discount on tuition; families with 4 or more students will receive 10% off their tuition.

Late payment: Tuition is considered **past due after 30 days** of the enrollment start date or 30 days past the payment due date, if on a payment plan. If a family has an outstanding balance due after the current session has ended, that family will not be allowed to enroll or attend future classes until their balance is paid in full. If a tuition refund is given, credit card fees and Registration Fees are NON-refundable.

Refund Policy: Once classes have begun, tuition is not-refundable. Enrollment guarantees your place in the classroom and a commitment to fulfill tuition requirement. Students who miss class or withdraw before the end of the semester are still obligated for the full semester's fees. Students are eligible for a partial refund **only if** they withdraw from class due to prolonged illness or injury. If a student **MUST** drop a class or classes, notification in writing needs to be sent to VDT Office at least 30 days **PRIOR** to the desired drop date. Tuition owed for classes will be re-calculated and pro-rated after receipt of 30-day notice. A refund check will be sent within 15 days. **PLEASE NOTE: Registration Fees, credit card fees, cancellation fees, and Performance Fees are NON-REFUNDABLE. NO EXCEPTIONS.**

Make-Ups: Each student is allowed a maximum of 6 make-up classes per year. Make-up classes may be at the student's level or one level below. Make-Up classes may not be carried over to the next session.

Scholarship Policy

A limited number of scholarships are available based on financial need and are awarded on a first-come-first-served basis to those who qualify. Applicants must be residents of Bay Area communities and must reapply each school year. Scholarship awards are for tuition only and do not apply to Registration or to Performance Fees.

A VDT scholarship recipient is required to maintain a good attendance record and show interest in the scholarship class they have been awarded. If the student has a poor attendance record, without a valid explanation, VDT can revoke the scholarship at any time. This decision can be made by the Executive Director or Art Director. A written notice is required to be given to the student's parent/guardian stating the reasons for VDT revoking the scholarship.

If the scholarship recipient decides to quit during the time period of the scholarship term, no tuition refund will be given.

Alumni Program

All students in good standing enrolled at VDT for at least 3 of the last 5 years, and have been enrolled in 3 or more technique classes in that time period, are considered an alumni after graduation from high school or turning 18 years old. After their current dance session has ended, all subsequent classes will be given free, and their Registration Fees and Performance Fees will be waived. VDT alumni are required to pay tuition for any extra non-technique classes (modern, Pilates, Stretch and Strength, Masters Class, etc.).

Men's Program

All VDT male students over the age of 18 are part of the Men's Program. This qualifies him for free tuition, with the registration fee and performance fees waived.

Teacher's Children and Grandchildren

All tuition, Registration Fees, and Performance Fees are waived for VDT teacher's children and/or grandchildren. The teacher must be payroll-based and is teaching regular scheduled classes.

Communications

If you need to speak with your child's instructor, arrangements can be made through the office. A short note may be given to the instructor at the beginning of class if you have information that affects that particular class. For example, a minor injury that may limit your child's participation in class that day.

Studio Office: 925-243-0925 office@valleydancetheatre.com
Children's Division Director - Madison Burgess Adkins: madison.l.adkins@gmail.com
Upper Division Director - Betsy Hausburg: vdt.director@gmail.com

Absences

Please call the studio 925.243.0925 and leave a message if your dancer will miss a class. Dancers are welcome to make-up a missed class by attending another class at their level or one level below. Please let the instructor know that the student is taking a make-up class.

Newsletters

Valley Dance Theatre uses a variety of formats to communicate with parents and students effectively. E-mails, Weekly Memos, and our website www.valleydancetheatre.com should be checked regularly in order to guarantee that you have the most up to date information.

Website information

Find information on our website: www.valleydancetheatre.com Find us on Facebook, Twitter, and Yelp.

Progress Reports & Advancement

Students typically remain in one level for one to several years depending on how quickly they master that level's requirements: strength, flexibility, placement, musicality, and specific technical accomplishments. Advancement to the next level is based on those requirements. Our staff will determine when your child is ready for the next level and will be evaluated by the next level's instructor. Regular class attendance is critical to a student's progress. Every year Valley Dance Theatre holds placement classes, usually in September prior to Nutcracker auditions. At these classes many of the instructors and directors will attend and take notes to give feedback to your student.

Auditions

Notices for auditions are posted prior to the audition date and dancers are invited to try out for the parts that best fit their skills and ability. All roles are subject to costume fittings as new costumes are NOT made every year.

There are many factors which determine why a dancer may or may not audition for a part: strength in pointe work, technique, stamina, stage presence, and extension. Invitations to try out for solos are at the Director's discretion.

As the costumes are custom made and one of a kind, they belong to VDT. It is a privilege to be able to wear these works of art. Therefore, there is to be **NO eating or drinking or sitting in costume.**

Dress Code

Discover Dance and Pre-Ballet Levels

Pink or black leotard, pink leather ballet slippers, pink tights. **Skirts may be worn only if they are permanently attached to the leotard. No loose skirts may be worn.**

Ballet 1 through Company

Black tank style leotards, pink leather ballet slippers or pointe shoes, pink tights. Black shorts and skirts may be worn for partnering classes and rehearsals only with instructor's permission.

Boys and Men Classes

Black shorts or black tights, white t-shirt, and black leather ballet shoes.

STUDENTS MUST WEAR STREET CLOTHES WHEN EXITING THE STUDIO!

For their safety, students may NOT wear just tights and leotards outside the studio. Please have students cover up with street clothes or gym clothes as appropriate.

Hair

Hair needs to be pulled back in a neat classic bun. No loose hair will be allowed. If you need help with your hair please ask. Dancers with short hair need to pull hair off the face and secure with clips.

No jewelry, baggy tops, denim, or shorts

Ballet skirts and warm up attire are allowed with teacher's approval.

School Rules

A professional level of respect for the art and for one another is expected from every member and visitor of Valley Dance Theatre. Parents and students must read the handbook and adhere to all policies and school rules. Failure to adhere to school policies may result in dismissal, subject to the Director's discretion.

Student Drop off / Pick up

Students should be accompanied by a parent or guardian in and out of the building. Valley Dance Theatre is not responsible for students dropped off outside the studio or who wait outside on the sidewalk to be picked up. Please do not drop off your student more than 15 minutes before class and picked up no later than 10 minutes after class has ended. All siblings and other children who are not students should have an adult with them at ALL times. Please be on time to pick up your dancer. If an emergency causes you to be late, please call the office 925.243.0925 and leave a message.

Parking

Please be aware of events that may cause delays for your family arriving on time. Many of the parking spots are patrolled by the city; Valley Dance Theatre is not responsible for any parking violations. Please DO NOT park in the Bank of the West parking lot....They will tow!

Parent Observation

Parent observation may be allowed at the instructor's discretion. Otherwise, no visitors are allowed in the studio while class or rehearsal is in session. Visitors and parents are expected to wait quietly in the lobby.

Young Children Supervision

Valley Dance Theatre does not provide supervision outside of class. Do not leave young children unsupervised at the dance studio.

Phone and Office

The office is for faculty and VDT staff use only. You must receive permission from the office manager to use the office phone.

Lost & Found

Valley Dance Theatre is not responsible for lost or stolen articles. Names should be written inside all ballet shoes and clothing. Please check in the lost and found box located in the dressing room for lost items. Items left in Lost & Found are given away at the end of each semester.

Dressing Room Rules

The dressing room is for dancers only. Please keep the area neat by placing personal belongings on the shelves or on hooks.

Please clean up any mess by throwing away used cups, food containers, and all other garbage.

Ballet Etiquette

Ballet Etiquette is an essential part of dance education. Ballet Etiquette brings self-esteem, self-respect, and appreciation for ballet to our dancers. The following rules are not arbitrary ideas but ideas that *enhance* dancer's understanding of their training. All students, visitors and parents, are expected to follow all ballet etiquette rules listed below.

Arrive on time

Classes start on time. Punctuality is essential to every student's dance education. Plan on arriving 10 minutes early for class. Grooming, stretching, and warming up are important parts of ballet. Please use the restroom before taking class. Instructors will not take young children to the restroom during class. Late arrivals should enter the dance studio quietly. Dancers who arrive more than 15 minutes late for class may be asked to observe rather than participate to avoid injuries.

Attendance

Regular attendance is key to maintaining class placement and for consideration for advancement. Frequent absences may result in the dancer being asked to move to a lower class level to regain strength and muscle memory.

Respect

Dancers will respect their instructors and classmates. Students are encouraged to ask questions by raising their hands. Bad attitude and behavioral problems will not be tolerated. Warning will be given, then the dancer will be asked to sit out the class. The instructor will contact the student's family to discuss student behavior if problems persist.

Follow the Dress Code

Dancers must follow the dress code and should bring a bag with extra tights, shoes, and grooming supplies. Street clothes must be worn when outside the studio. For their safety, dancers should **never appear outside wearing only dance attire.**

Food and Drinks

No food or drink (other than water in closed container) are allowed inside either studio. Water is provided in the lobby for students and instructors. Valley Dance Theatre has many students with severe nut allergies; please avoid eating nuts at the studio. No gum is allowed in dressing rooms or inside the studio. A light snack before class is an excellent idea!

Noise

Please keep noise to a minimum while in the lobby and hallways. There should be no running around or climbing in the hallways or lobby.

Pay Attention and Work Hard!! Do not hang or sit on barres, or touch the mirrors under any circumstances.



Hold Harmless Agreement / Release Waiver

Must be signed and returned before taking class or attending rehearsal

The undersigned parent/dancer indemnifies and agrees to holds harmless Valley Dance Theatre, its Board of Directors, officers, instructors, agents, and assigns from any and all liability whatsoever, for any damage or injuries, and from any and all claims and demands, including attorney fees, arising out of the party's participation in dance lessons, classes, workshops, performances, fundraisers and other related activities provided by and/or at the facility of Valley Dance Theatre.

The undersigned parent/dancer understands that students/dancers may occasionally appear in promotional performance videos, photos, brochures, and other materials as a result of his/her association with Valley Dance Theatre. By registering for a class, such use of the student/dancer's name and likeness are agreed to and acknowledged and, accordingly, all right, title and interest in same are waived.

Vaccination Compliance Agreement

It is the policy of the School of the Valley Dance Theatre that all students are current on their vaccinations as specified by the State of California Senate Bill 277. If your child is home schooled, please provide a copy of your student's current vaccination card.

If attending public or private schools (pre-K ~ 12), please complete the following information:

I certify that my child is attending _____ during the 2017-2018 school year.

My child's vaccination is up to date: _____ YES _____ NO

I have read, certify, and agree to the above terms and conditions of this agreement.

Date

Dancer/Student Name - Printed

Dancer/Student Signature (if student is 18 or over)

Parent/Guardian Signature (if student 17 or under)