



STUDIO HANDBOOK
2018-2019



Welcome!

Thank you for choosing Debra Sparks Dance Works for your child's dance education. Ms. Debra's goal remains as it began in 1984: to teach young, talented children the wonderful art of ballet and dance, to encourage their growth in self-esteem with pride in their accomplishments, and—above all—to instill in them the “love of dance!”

Debra Sparks Dance Works is unlike any other dance studio in Bucks County. With a strong emphasis on form, style, and grace, students develop an unsurpassed level of confidence that enriches their lives both on and off stage. Headed by former professional dancer, Ms. Debra Sparks, DSDW has raised the bar and become the new standard against which other dance schools try to compete. Classical and contemporary dance is taught, with a focus on ballet, the technical framework for most other styles of dance.

While students hone their skills in tap, jazz, ballet, Pointe, and lyrical, it is the underlying premise of the dance studio that sets Debra Sparks Dance Works apart.

Dancers join DSDW expecting to learn solid dance technique. They walk away with much more. From rehearsal to performance, whether it's an audition or competition, Debra Sparks' students learn the etiquette of dance while respecting themselves and others around them. DSDW can be separated from all other schools for proudly training students with professional careers with approximately 10 Broadway performers and 15 Ballet Company members. DSDW has also earned over twenty college dance scholarships for our students.

We want to make your experience with our studio as rewarding as possible. The policies and guidelines in this handbook are designed to help answer your questions concerning attire, class placement, behavior, recital, etc. We have tried to give you as much information as possible so you will know what is required of both you and your dancer. Please feel free to ask questions if there is something you do not understand. Please do not hesitate to contact our director, Miss Debra Sparks, if there is a problem. Nothing can be fixed unless we know there is a problem. You can contact Miss Debra or Ms. Katie, our office administrator, at the studio at 215-579-5678 or via email at debrasparksdanceworks5678@gmail.com. Our office administrator will call you back during office hours while Miss Debra will return your call during non-teaching hours.

Our Office Staff

We are fortunate to have a wonderful staff at the studio. They are always ready to help you with anything you might need. Please just ask! Mrs. Katie Green is our office administrator. If there is anything you need while at the studio, please go to the front desk and someone will be happy to assist you. **If no one is at the desk, you may email us at debrasparksdanceworks5678@gmail.com and you will receive a response at our earliest convenience.**



ATTENDANCE

Students or parents are asked to call or email in all absences. **There are no makeup classes, credits, or refunds for missed classes.**

BIG BALLET

DSDW is the only dance studio in the area to perform a full length ballet in addition to traditional dance numbers at our annual recital. Our recital consists of three acts: Act 1 (The Big Ballet), Act 2 (Recital Dances) and Act 3 (More Recital Dances). The Big Ballet changes each year but is usually a show that is appealing to families and children. Examples of past shows include Cinderella, The Little Mermaid, and the Wizard of Oz. Our youngest dancers typically do not perform in The Big Ballet, as it is more demanding in terms of rehearsal time. Big Ballet classes begin at Ballet/Jazz 4 or Ballet/Jazz 5 (depending on the show), and Ballet Workshop 1. If you are unsure if your dancer will be in The Big Ballet, please ask. Dancers learn their Big Ballet routine as part of their Ballet/Jazz class or Ballet Workshop and that is the recital dance for that class. Dancers in a Ballet/Jazz combo class will also learn and perform a jazz number.

BIRTHDAY PARTIES

DSDW offers dance birthday parties. Your child will enjoy dance instruction with her friends on her very special day. Choose a theme for the party such as "Princess", "Frozen" a Luau, Pop Stars, or any of her other favorites. Contact the office administrator, via email, for additional details.

CLASS CANCELLATIONS

Occasionally we must cancel classes due to unforeseen circumstances, illness, or emergencies. Every effort will be made to reschedule the cancelled class within a reasonable amount of time. There are no refunds for dancers who are unable to attend rescheduled classes.

CLASS ETIQUETTE & BEHAVIOR

All dancers must behave with a level of self-control and respect that is age appropriate. Students are expected to arrive on time, be properly attired, and be ready to learn. As Miss Debra would say, "you must be confident and elegant young ladies and perfect gentlemen."

There is no gum chewing at any time anywhere in the studio. Water is the only liquid permitted. If your dancer brings snacks or food into the dressing room area, it is her/his responsibility to clean it up.

CLASS OBSERVATIONS



We want you to be involved in your child's dance education as much as possible, and while our dancers love to perform for their parents, the children's focus in dance class must be on learning. In order to accomplish this, we have a closed-door policy for all classes. Occasionally as we approach recital time, parents may be invited to come in towards the end of a class for a brief performance.

CLASS PLACEMENT

Dancers are placed in classes according to the discretion of the teaching staff and Ms. Debra. Placement is based on technique, strength, and age. Placement may be altered during the first few weeks of class to accommodate the dynamics of the newly formed classes.

CLASS TRANSFER/WITHDRAWAL

If for some reason at any time during the dance season you would like to request that your dancer be transferred to another class or withdrawn from a class, you must notify the studio by emailing debrasparksdanceworks5678@gmail.com. **It is absolutely necessary that this notification be given in writing, as class rosters must be kept accurate.** In the case of a withdrawal, you will be responsible for any and all charges incurred on your account until the withdrawal email is received.

COMPETITION TEAM

The DSDW Competition Team Dancers join by invitation from Miss Debra only. Our studio has a Mini Team, Junior Team and a Senior Team; dancers are placed according to age and technical ability. There may be a cross-over between the Junior and Senior teams according to Miss Debra's discretion.

Miss Debra chooses dancers for solo, duo, trio, small/large group and production opportunities based on technique, commitment, confidence, musicality, showmanship, and ability to learn material quickly and to correct mistakes. A parent cannot make a decision or pay an extra amount of money for this honor. Any student offered a solo or duo/trio with a specific teacher, must be enrolled in one of that teachers' classes.

Guest choreographers are invited to design numbers for our team dancers. Past Guest Artists have included Valerie Salgado, choreographer from the hit TV show SMASH, as well as Lauren Froderman, season seven winner of "So You Think You Can Dance"!

All team members must enroll in Junior or Senior Team Workshop, Jump & Turn, Master Ballet Technique, at least one Sunday Classical Ballet Workshop, and an appropriate Ballet/Jazz class. Team members must also attend our Summer and Winter Intensive Programs. In addition, when DSDW offers master classes and showcases, all team members are required to participate.

We compete in different competitions each year. Some locations are local, while others may require a hotel stay. Regional competitions typically run from 1-3 days; National competitions can run up to 5 days. Prices vary as each competition company has its own pricing and requirements.



Group entries are the least expensive. Duo/trio entries cost more and solos are the most expensive. Some competitions also feature a Title division for solos, which typically are even more costly. The studio does not profit from competition fees. The fees parents pay go directly to cover the exact charges from the competition company. Competitions may offer optional modeling or photogenic divisions. Master classes are sometimes included with a competition. Each competition varies and has its own policies and rules. Parents are responsible for reviewing the guidelines. Photography and videotaping is never allowed at competitions.

Fundraisers are held yearly to help defray all competition costs excluding competition entry fees. All team members are required to participate. Dates and details are shared as early as possible so that families may plan accordingly.

COMPETITION TEAM EXPECTATIONS

- All team members must agree to compete in all chosen competitions, including Nationals, if Miss Debra decides to enter.
- All team members are required to attend any special events for the team; showcases, fundraisers, community service, etc.
- Members must be in competition class from the first week of classes up until the June recital.
- Team members that sustain an injury or illness will be excused from competition while still remaining a valued team member. Injured dancers must still attend all rehearsals, classes and competition.
- A role on this team must be taken very seriously and professionally. This opportunity is one that will afford huge progress, great fun, a dance family for support and encouragement, and one that will make memories to last a lifetime!
- Apprentices have all the same responsibilities and commitments as team members

COSTUMES

Costume deposits are due the first week of October. To ensure that costumes are ordered for your child, all costumes must be paid by the deadline. The initial deposit is \$50 per costume. The balance is due the first week of December. Costumes range in price, but typically average \$60-\$85. The cost of costumes includes costume fee, shipping, handling, tax and staff management compensation. Please pay all costume deposits and balances with a separate check (not with tuition). This makes the accounting significantly easier on our office staff.

Costume balance payments will have a late fee of \$10.00 per costume if paid after December 7th, 2019. After January 10th, an additional 10.00 late fee will be added per costume. After February 10th, an additional late fee will be notified. This late fee will be determined according to each costume company's policy regarding availability and custom making if costumes become unavailable.

***Please note this policy only applies to students enrolled in time to make these deadlines.

Many parents struggle with what size to order. If unsure, we recommend sizing up. A costume can always be altered to be smaller, whereas a costume that is too small is very difficult, if not impossible, to fit.



There are no refunds for any costume once they have been ordered regardless of the reason.

Costumes arrive in the spring. They do not all arrive at the same time, however, all costumes arrive before our June recital. Be sure to label all of your costume pieces, including accessories. Occasionally parents are asked to provide an accessory to complete a costume (ex. gloves, socks, flowers for hair).

Parents are responsible for any needed alterations and should check the DSDW web site for directions after costume distribution. For your convenience, we provide contact information for excellent and affordable seamstresses. Because the seamstresses do many of our costumes, they often know exactly what to do with each garment. Information for the seamstresses is shared when costumes begin arriving. It is the parents' responsibility to set up appointments and to pay for the alterations.

DANCE FLOOR

Nobody is permitted on the dance floor in street shoes. This is for the protection of the dance floors.

DANCE FOR A CURE

Dance for a Cure is a springtime event held in honor of Phyllis Sparks, Miss Debra's mother. All of the proceeds benefit the American Cancer Society. All DSDW dancers are welcome to attend the event and to bring their friends for a fun night of dancing in the studio!

DRESS CODE

Hair must be pulled up and away from face in a secure bun at all times unless noted otherwise. Dress code and hair in strictly enforced.

Princess Ballet, Princess Ballet & All That Jazz, Little Rock Stars, Broadway Bound, B/J 1, Story time Dance, Creative Movement, Ballet Tap 1, Ballet Acro 1, Ballet Tap Jazz 1/2: Light pink leotard, pink seamed convertible tights, pink canvas split-sole ballet shoes.

Disney Dance 1: Light pink leotard, pink seamed convertible tights, pink canvas split-sole ballet shoes.

Disney Dance 2: Black leotard, pink seamed convertible tights, pink canvas split-sole ballet shoes.

Glee: Leotard of choice with pink tights. Ballet and jazz shoes.

Junior & Senior Team Workshops: Red leotard with pink tights.

Ballet Workshops, Master Ballet, & Contemporary Ballet: Any color leotard. Pink seamed convertible tights, pink canvas split-sole ballet shoes and/or Pointe shoes.



Contemporary, Competitive Jazz, Jazz/Funk, Jump/Turn, Lyrical, Contemporary Lyrical, Musical Theater Jazz, Tap, Broadway Jazz; So You Think You Can Dance Contemporary & Lyrical, Improv, All Fusion Classes., Modern Contemporary: Leotard of your choice, tights in tan, pink, or black. Tap shoes: black split-sole, Oxford type. Jazz/lyrical shoes: tan split-sole leather jazz shoe and/or tan canvas half shoe. Contemporary & Fusion Classes: foot undies or no shoes.

All Other Ballet/Jazz Classes: Black leotard, pink seamed convertible tights, pink ballet shoes.

Pre pointe & Pointe Classes: Any color leotard, pink seamed convertible tights, pink Pointe shoes.

Ballet Partnering: Black leotard, pink seamed convertible tights, pink Pointe shoes.

Hip Hop, Acrobatic, Pilates, Mommy & Me, & Adult Classes: Appropriate casual attire (loose fitting pants/shorts, tee shirt/sweatshirt & sneakers, etc.) Hair in a bun, *or* ponytail.

Yoga & Barre: Appropriate casual attire. Yoga pants or leggings recommended; no shorts. No shoes. Studio socks/ballet shoes recommended but not required.

Floor Barre: Leotard of your choice, Tights of your choice, Bare Feet

Heels for Broadway: any leotard and tights, tan character shoes, with any type heel

Tools for Choreography: comfortable attire for class. Any leotard and tights, hair in a bun, for teaching.

DVD PLAYER

The DVD is available to students to watch dance related DVDs. Students are not permitted to use the equipment and must see the office administrator, or one of her assistants, when wanting to use the DVD player.

FILE FOLDERS/FACEBOOK

Every registered student will have a file folder. Student folders are located in the upstairs lobby to the right of the door. The folders are filed alphabetically according to the student's last name. These folders should be checked on a regular basis for important studio information. DSDW also has a FACEBOOK page. Please check it regularly for updates and important information.

FUNDRAISERS

The DSDW Competition Team runs several fundraisers to assist with the purchase of team costumes, props, etc. Team members will receive detailed information as to their obligations for the fundraisers. All DSDW dancers are welcome to attend these events. We appreciate your support!



INCLEMENT WEATHER CLOSINGS

DSDW is closed for snow/inclement weather when the Council Rock School District is closed. There are no makeup classes or refunds for inclement weather closings.

LOST AND FOUND

We will hold all items for one month only. The first day of every month, all lost and found items unclaimed will be donated to charity.

MEDIA PACKAGE

Starting this year, each family is required to pay a **“media fee” of \$53.00**. This fee will include an on-line account with DanceBug, with access to the Ballet Meets Broadway 2019 recital, and a hard copy of one recital DVD upon request. This fee is due by **February 1, 2019**.

PARKING

There is absolutely no parking in front of the studio or along the side of the road leading to Vince’s Auto (except for lined parking spots). This is for the safety of our dancers. Please drive cautiously through the parking lot when dropping off and picking up your dancer. If absolutely necessary, parking is permitted for brief visits to the studio but never in the spots by the dumpster.

PICTURE DAY

Picture Day is scheduled for June 2, 2018 with a makeup day of June 4, 2018 for those who cannot make the first date. Brochures with picture packages will be distributed ahead of time along with a schedule. Purchasing pictures is not required.

PRIVATE LESSONS

All private lessons are scheduled and taught individually by Miss Tamara. You can contact Miss Tamara by emailing the studio. Miss Tamara’s private lessons fill quickly and are on a first-come-first-served basis. Payment is made directly to Miss Tamara and checks should be made payable Tamara Golden. A 24 notice is required for any cancellations. If cancelling a private lesson with less than a 24 hour notice, a 50% charge will be incurred. Private lessons with any other teacher must be with permission from Ms. Debra via an email to the studio only.



RECITAL

We have two dress rehearsals and two performances for our annual June recital. Our recital for 2019 will be held at the Burlington Township Performing Arts Center. Dress rehearsals will be held on 6/12 and 6/13/19. Performances will be held on 6/14 and 6/15/19. A recital packet is distributed in the spring and includes show lineups as well as order forms for t-shirts, flowers, videos, program ads, etc.

Dancers must arrive 45 minutes prior to Showtime and stay until the Grand Finale is over. Our youngest dancers typically only perform in one of the two shows. The Big Ballet is Act 1 of both shows, so if your dancer is in The Big Ballet, your child will be dancing in both shows. Some classes perform their recital number in both shows and others perform their recital number once. The recital lineup is determined based on the needs and ages of our dancers and a desire to keep the show length reasonable for all.

Parents are asked to volunteer for one show as a backstage chaperone or to take a shift at the snack and merchandise tables. No one else will be allowed backstage during performances. This is for the safety of our dancers. After the Grand Finale, one female family member may come backstage to pick up your dancer. Male dancers have a separate dressing room and should be picked up by a male family member or, if old enough, meet their families in the lobby.

Recital Makeup

- *Lipstick – red for all costumes; no shiny, glossy, or sparkly lip colors are permitted*
- *Base makeup - one shade lighter than skin tone color.*
- *Blush – peach or pink.*
- *Contour shade - bronze or brownish-peach.*
- *Younger dancers may choose to wear lighter colors, but please keep in mind that our stage lighting is professional.*
- *Eyeshadow – matte pinks, browns, and/or peaches; no sparkly eye shadow permitted.*
- *Mascara and eyeliner – brown or black*
- *False eyelashes – optional*

Recital Hair

- *Hair should be arranged in a secured bun located on the top of the head towards the back; the hair may be braided into the bun if you choose.*
- *Use lots of mousse/gel and hairspray to insure no wispy or fly away ends.*
- *Use ample bobby/hair pins and hair nets so that there are no stray ends. The hair and the bun should not move during the entire show when removing and replacing headpieces.*
- *All headpieces must be secured with bobby pins/hair pins, barrettes, and/or hair clips.*
- *No bangs permitted.*

REFERRALS

DSDW loves welcoming new dancers to our studio family! For every new dancer you refer to DSDW and who registers for at least one class, you will receive a \$25 tuition credit. The new dancer must register for and pay for at least one month's tuition. There is no limit for referral credits.



REHEARSALS

We have two dress rehearsals at the recital venue, the week of the recital. The first rehearsal is for The Big Ballet only. The second rehearsal includes the regular recital numbers *and* The Big Ballet. Parents are responsible for supervising and preparing their dancers during rehearsals. The dress rehearsal lineup is completely different than the recital lineup. During the recital, we ask for parent volunteers to chaperone backstage. Some classes will have their dress rehearsal at the studio for the convenience of our youngest dancers, rather than at the theater itself. You will be notified if you fall into this category. There are typically several additional rehearsals for The Big Ballet in May *at the studio*. Occasionally there is a need to schedule one or more additional rehearsals for recital dances. There is no charge for these additional rehearsals at the studio.

SNACKS & WATER

Bottled water and snacks are available for purchase. Please leave your money in the jar on the shelf at the front desk. Dancers and parents are trusted to make change from the jar when necessary. No I.O.U.'s!

STUDIO APPAREL

Visit our web store at www.teamstore.gtmsportswear.com/debrasparks for t-shirts, shorts, sweats, and more! We also offer special sales for the holidays and at recital time. Be sure to check our monthly newsletters and emails for purchasing information.

SUMMER CAMP

We offer two summer camps: Nutcracker Camp (2 levels) (Ages 2-8) and a Summer Intensive. Brochures and dates are distributed in early spring. Competition Team members are required to register for and participate in the Summer Intensive.

TUITION

Tuition is calculated based on the number of class hours enrolled. DSDW has a sliding scale tuition system where class rates per hour lessen greatly with more classes taken. Workshops, Pointe/Variations, Jenn Rose, Yosbel Delgado, and Alexa Luke's classes are a flat rate per month regardless of total hours enrolled. Workshop hours are not included when calculating tuition rates for other classes. Tuition is due in full for each month, September through May, regardless of the length of the month or the number of classes that meet. June is often prorated based on our recital date. A late fee of \$10.00 will apply for any tuition received after the first week of the month. Returned checks will incur a fee of \$30.00. We accept checks and cash only. Checks should be made payable to **Debra Sparks**. Please leave your check payment in the tuition box to the right of the office window. Cash payments should be left in the cash box which is below the tuition box.



CALENDAR for 2018/2019

September

9/4 Classes Begin
9/4-10 New Student/Class Placement
9/14 Competition Team Audition 7:15-9:00pm

October

10/5 Costume Deposits Due
10/13 Monster Mash 6-8 pm
10/31 Studio Closed - Halloween

November

11/22-25 Studio Closed – Thanksgiving
11/26 Classes Resume

December

12/7 Costume Balances Due
12/16-1/1 Studio Closed for regular classes – Winter Break
12/17-19 Winter Intensive 4:30-8:00pm

January

1/1 Studio Closed
1/2 Classes Resume

February

2/1 Media fee due date

March

3/22-24 Inferno Dance Competition – Philadelphia

April

4/14-21 Studio closed for regular classes - Spring Break
4/22 Classes Resume
4/26-28 World Class Talent Competition – King of Prussia

May

5/12 Studio Closed – Mother’s Day
5/25-27 Studio Closed – Memorial Day
5/28 Classes Resume

June

6/1 Picture Day
6/12 & 13 Dress Rehearsal (BTPAC)
6/14 & 15 Ballet Meets Broadway 2019!



Required Policies and Agreements

(must be signed and returned the first day of classes)

Policy Terms and Conditions

***I agree to all policies and procedures set forth by Debra Sparks Dance Works. These policies and procedures can be found in our student handbook, studio brochures, and on our website.**

I have read the above and I agree.

Parent Signature

Date

Publicity Exclusion Form

(must be signed and returned the first day of classes)

As you know, the Debra Sparks Dance Works' public relations activities frequently involve photographing and videotaping of student activities for inclusion in newsletters, on the website and on social media sites such as Facebook, Instagram and YouTube, as well as other outlets. We recognize that some parents may not want their children's photo or video used for these purposes. If you do not wish to have your child's photograph or video published in this way, **kindly complete the section below and return it to the office by 10/1/18.** If you do not return the form by the deadline, the Debra Sparks Dance Works will use photos and videos of your child as set forth above, even after your child is no longer a student at the Debra Sparks Dance Works. To be clear, you will have consented to the use of your child's photo and video while she/he is a student and after she/he leaves the Debra Sparks Dance Works if you do not specifically request exclusion.

I do not want my child's photograph or video published _____

Name of Parent / Guardian: _____

Name of Student: _____

Parent / Guardian Signature _____

Date: _____