

Your child is enrolled at . . .

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Founded 1982

Thank you for choosing our school for your dance education. We are proud of our program and proud of our students. Our faculty and staff will do everything in our power to provide the best dance education in our area. The following information will help you and your child get the most out of your Opus experience.

A Guide for Parents

What Will My Child Learn at Opus II?

To Dance in a manner that will give them choices, opportunities, and a lifelong interest.

Physical Development

- Improved flexibility, stamina, strength, agility, and self awareness.
- Enhanced ability to use both sides of the body and brain

As students learn to dance, they also learn about collaborative art forms.

- Music
- Art
- Literature
- Theatre

Social Skills

- Teamwork, Cooperation, Responsibility
- Manners and Etiquette

Dancers learn to appreciate

- Delayed Gratification
- Constructive Criticism

Time Management

Dancers are often the most active students in school. They learn to budget their time because they know that their school lessons are important but so are their dance lessons, so everything must be worked into that little bit of time each afternoon after school. Because of this and the physical activity involved, dancers tend to have more stamina for daily life. And after all, it is people with stamina who win life's races, battles and challenges!

Parents

You are invited to observe classes! We find that the parents who know the most about our program are the most supportive. Parents, grandparents and guardians are always welcome to observe classes at Opus II. Here are a few simple rules to follow when observing classes.



- Enjoy the class quietly.
- If you have youngsters, please be considerate of noise which may cause distractions for the class. Younger non-dancing children may be unintentionally disruptive.
- If observation space is limited, please take turns.
- Please resist the temptation to correct your child from the “*sidelines*”.

The teacher must have each student’s full attention. If your child has trouble concentrating on the lesson while family members are in attendance, your observation may need to be limited until the child develops better concentration.

For Dancers

Tips for getting the most out of your dance classes . . .

- Make a strong commitment to attend all classes for your level.
- Be consistent. Working hard in one class and slacking off in the next will get you nowhere. You are not only learning steps, you are training your muscles. This means repetition, repetition, repetition!
- Attend each class prepared to learn; true progress is made when you dance “full-out” all the time.
- Listen to every correction, whether it’s directed to you or another dancer. When a teacher corrects you it is an honor and expresses how much they care. Always thank the teacher or choreographer who offers you a correction. Nothing can stop a student who is appreciative of their teacher’s knowledge.
- Follow all studio rules and policies. How you dress and behave in the studio predicts how you will manage yourself in the theatre setting. Make a commitment to be on time, in the proper dress with the proper hair-do.
- Rehearsals are dedicated to choreography or “cleaning” the choreography. A dancer who misses a rehearsal is holding back their own progress and that of their classmates and the choreographer. Repeating the choreography at the next rehearsal keeps everyone from progressing at the rate they should.
- Respect classmates who may be stronger than you. If the “good ones” weren’t there, we’d never know how far we can go! Don’t waste your time with envy. Learn from them instead!
- Performances are your opportunity to show the world the result of your dedication and hard work. Take the time to be mentally and physically prepared. Be sure your costumes are pressed, shoes are clean and all accessories are accounted for.
- Finally, realize how lucky you are to have dance in your life. There are literally millions of young people throughout the world who would love to be in your place. Expressing the emotions of life through the art of dance is a privilege.

Opus Policies

Please follow the rules. It is our belief that every class prepares students for their onstage experience. Courtesy, cleanliness, and orderliness are essential to a smoothly running performance.

- No gum or candy in class
- No large or dangling jewelry in class
- Hair should be in a bun or suitable secure fashion off the face
- **Do not wear classroom dress on the street – WEAR A COVER-UP.**
- As you wait for your child or your class you must BE QUIET. Do not allow younger non-dancing children to disturb class.
- In case of inclement weather, please call the studio. Closings will be stated on voice mail message AFTER 12 noon.

Attendance

Dance education requires total involvement of the student – physical, emotional, and intellectual. Repetition is important for developing the dancer's body – the instrument of artistic expression. Therefore, attendance at all scheduled classes and special rehearsals is important. If a class is missed for a legitimate reason – illness, school or church function, or a death in the family – a make-up class may be taken within the same semester in which the absence occurred. Anyone dismissed from class for disciplinary reasons will not receive a refund.

It is not necessary to notify the studio for an occasional absence from class. However, if there is an extended illness or circumstance where the student's progress will be impaired, the director should be made aware of the situation.

Be On Time

Opus students should always be 10 to 15 minutes early for classes and rehearsals! This offers them time to prepare. **Latecomers will not be permitted to participate in classes.** However, they are encouraged to stay and observe. This is not intended as a punishment. It is to ensure safety and teach proper class and performance etiquette.

Follow Dress Code

Please familiarize yourself with the specifics regarding your child's class. Girls - Please acquire the necessary hair nets, bobby pins and elastics to wear hair in a **classical bun as required in class** and performance.

- Ballet (girls) pink tights, pink ballet shoes, black leotard
- Ballet (boys) black or white ballet shoes, sweat pants or black tights, white t-shirt, dance belt.
- Tap, Jazz, Modern a variety of dancewear may be worn providing it does not inhibit movement or hide the line or quality of movement
- In all classes dancers may be asked to remove extra clothing if the teacher feels that it is not appropriate for the class.
- No plastic or parachute pants permitted.

Policies Concerning Studio Snacks

- No sticky or messy foods are permitted.
- **All drinks must be in non-spillable sports bottles.**
- No cups from fast food restaurants are permitted.
- No Dairy Queen treats are permitted.
- No juice boxes or pouches are permitted.
- If you eat at the studio, please clean up after yourself.

Please do not ask to borrow costumes

No costumes or accessories shall be loaned to any dancer except for an authorized appearance under the name ARB or Opus II Dance Studio. Should you need costumes or dancewear for your own personal use the Director will assist you with information regarding supply sources.

Tuition Payments

Tuition provides the basis of support for Opus II Dance Studio. Please pay on time. Students will receive:

- Classes taught by highly qualified faculty members or advanced student assistants.
- Professionally appointed studio spaces.
- The highest quality dance education in the Ashland/Mansfield area.



Tuition must be paid in full on or before the last day of the semester. Statements will be provided at mid-semester as a reminder of this obligation. Late fees will apply for accounts which must be billed post semester.

Communication

Announcements

Rehearsal schedules, audition notices, special events, scheduling changes, etc. **are routinely placed on the bulletin board and sent to our e-mail list.** Extra copies are placed in the waiting areas for distribution. As the young dancers are not always mindful of this information, parents are encouraged to check regularly. If you are a regular e-mailer you should request to be placed on the Opus Students e-mail list by sending a message to opusarb@zoominternet.net requesting to be placed on the list.

Concerns & Special Needs

Occasional circumstances may need special attention. **Please use the following preferred methods to bring concerns to the attention of the director.**

- e-mail: opusarb@zoominternet.net
- studio mail box – located near the studio entrance

While personal contact may be necessary for follow-up, keep in mind the hectic schedule under which the director and faculty members work. **If the teacher is “on the run” between classes, it is not a good time to approach concerns.** It is better to leave a message which can be given full attention at a less stressful time.

The following concerns should be brought to the attention of the artistic director.

- **Questions concerning progress** – *If your child is having trouble “keeping up,” he/she may have been placed in the wrong level or perhaps a little special coaching is in order.*
- **Student/Teacher relationships** – *If your child is having trouble understanding a teacher’s corrections, every attempt will be made to come to a satisfactory solution for all involved.*
- **Student-to-student relationships** – *Students are expected to conduct themselves properly and respect faculty and peers. If this is not the case, every attempt will be made to bring the parties to an understanding.*
- **Personal problems** – *Occasionally a student has a personal problem which needs special support. Please bring these concerns to the attention of the director.*

The following subject is not open for discussion:

- The casting of roles for onstage performances.





Spring Concert

At the end of the school year, we present an annual *Spring Dance Concert* which allows our students to gain experience on stage. This requires a great deal of extra work for our administrative and artistic staff. Students and their parents are expected to provide support and understanding to insure a good show by:

- Attending all classes.
- Attending all extra rehearsals as scheduled.
- Following directions as provided on special communications issued throughout the spring semester.

It is important to note that most of the expenses of costumes, accessories and properties will be defrayed by Opus II Dance Studio.

- There is no additional fee attached to your tuition.
- There is no costume fee.

However

- Shoes, tights and leotards, and other basic dancewear must be furnished by the dancers.
- You may be asked to purchase special dancewear or other costume needs.
- Items that you are required to purchase will be usable again as either class or street wear.

Funding the Spring Concert

As there is no fee charged for the work of the staff, and costume expenses are kept to a minimum **parents are expected to support the school by purchasing tickets - the sole funding of the Spring Concert.** All of the other fundraisers at this event (Flower and T-shirt sales) support Ashland Regional Ballet, a separate arts organization in residence at Opus II Dance Studio. To find out more about Ashland Regional Ballet read a special brochure entitled "*Opening the Door.*"

*Dancers are selected for Ashland Regional Ballet by audition only.
Enrollment in Opus II does not imply membership in Ashland Regional Ballet.*

Spring Concert Tickets may be purchased in the studio during class-times in the weeks leading up to the concert, at the theatre during rehearsals, or at the door.

The Nutcracker



A production of Ashland Regional Ballet By Audition Only

Ashland Regional Ballet holds open auditions for supporting cast positions in *The Nutcracker*. Only students with the ability to uphold the standards of Ashland Regional Ballet will be accepted into the cast. Those dancers and their parents are expected to accept their roles with an understanding of the responsibility and honor that has been bestowed upon them, and make *The Nutcracker* a priority for the duration of rehearsals and performance. The audition process is an important aspect of dance education, but can be difficult for students and parents if the roles they desire are not forthcoming. Please do not attempt this avenue of opportunity unless you are willing to cheerfully abide by the director's casting decisions, and make *The Nutcracker* a priority until the end of the final performance.

*Opus II Dance Studio is the home of Ashland Regional Ballet (ARB).
Enrollment in Opus II Dance Studio does not imply membership in ARB.
ARB dancers are selected through a special audition process.*

Artistic Development

Some dancers progress faster than others. It is just a fact of life that different individuals are endowed with different talents and aptitudes. Dance is a complex art form, and it is often difficult to predict which student will become a great dancer. Natural physical facility is obvious at the outset, but there is much more involved in the training of a dancer. Desire, quickness of mind, perseverance, and artistic temperament are all key ingredients in the development of a successful dancer.

Dance as recreation

If your child wishes to dance “just for fun”, then the intensity of the training may be more relaxed. The majority of dance students enjoy this type of participation. They will be included in the annual *Spring Concert*, eligible to enter choreography in the annual *Choreography Showcase* (at the appropriate age – watch for details at the beginning of the school year), and eligible to audition for *The Nutcracker*. (Acceptance in *The Nutcracker* cast is never guaranteed as part of your Opus enrollment.)

Dance as a serious interest

Dancers must train hard while they are young. If your child wishes to explore the possibility of a dance or dance-related career, they should be attending daily ballet classes as well as every elective subject available by the time they are 12 years old. During the early teen years they should also audition for membership in Ashland Regional Ballet. Dance must become a priority for this type of dancer.

Dance education's long-term benefits

Even if your child has only a casual interest in dance, the benefits are long lasting and culturally enriching. They learn much more than just dance in dance school.

Please make an effort to attend all local performances!

Students learn by observing! At Opus we make it a priority to give our dancers opportunities to attend and participate in performances. When you receive a flyer in the mail about a performance, DO NOT THROW IT AWAY ... GO! ... You will have a great time, help your child become better educated, and lend your support to our local dance community. Your child may one day be one of those performers.



You will know your child is doing well if:

- He/she looks forward to class. Dancers enjoy the hard physical work that is the essence of dance training.
- You notice home practice. While ballet students need the watchful eye of the teacher to practice ballet technique, students should practice stretching and strengthening exercises at home. These exercises will be a daily occurrence for one who wishes to dance well.
- You have a true dancer in the family if you notice bending, stretching, turning, leaping, and tapping occurring in your home on a constant basis!

To dance or not to dance . . .

If your child has difficulty with the physicality of dance:

- Continue for as long as he/she enjoys the participation.

If your child dislikes the class:

- Continue to the end of the semester. A student may have a slow start. The class may not be what they expected if they have no prior knowledge of dance training. They may change their mind by the end of the semester if they stick with it, and even if they don't, they will achieve a sense of accomplishment from completing the semester.

If you come to the conclusion that dance is not where you want to continue to invest your time, here are a few tips to help your student come to the completion of their dance training.

- Complete the semester in which they are enrolled. Our school year is divided into semesters, which allows a student to “gracefully” bow out after completing a semester. We feel, very strongly, that young people need to learn to follow through with commitments so as not to develop a “quitter” mentality. The break between semesters provides the students an opportunity to reassess their commitment before beginning the new semester.
- If you have been cast in a role, complete your artistic obligations through to the end of the performances.
- Make sure all financial obligations are met.

Former students in good standing will be welcome to return at a later time if they find that they miss their involvement in dance.



**The decision “to dance or not to dance” is personal.
Each student must come to their own conclusions based
on their own circumstances and interests.**



Opus II Dance Studio teaches dance as a performing art. Every class prepares the dance student for the stage. Our rules, while they may at first seem strict, are the essentials of good rehearsal habits and performance preparation. **Our students and their parents are expected to know our policies and follow the rules.**

See page 3 for a listing of our basic studio policies.

Dance Education

If it's worth doing, it's worth doing right!

It takes a unique combination of natural talent, self-discipline, and artistic temperament, mixed with strong physical attributes to produce a dancer with viable professional abilities. Few of the students who undertake dance training will become professional dancers or choreographers. And few parents will have that aspiration for their child.

But that is no reason to minimize the importance of the study. After all Dance Education is just that – EDUCATION - and should be thought of as any other form of learning.

In fact . . . Many children learn to play sports without intending to become professional athletes, but you still expect good coaching. They study music without the expectation of a professional career, yet you expect them to learn the basics of music theory. If your child does not wish to become a Scientist you still insist on an accurate education in this and all other academic subjects.

You should insist on no less for your child's study of dance!

Opus II Dance Studio

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