

Weehawken Dance: The program where education and technique meets artistry to support the WHOLE dancer.

Our Mission Statement

Weehawken Dance strives to provide the highest quality education and training as we continue to be a fun and welcoming place for dancers of all ages and abilities. Through a comfortable and healthy learning environment, Weehawken Dance continues to support the whole dancer, physically and emotionally, as they achieve their goals and accomplish success. We are committed to enriching our community as we create dancers of all kinds. Weehawken Dance offers a full range of dance classes for children and adults, summer camps, and workshops. We believe that art and creativity is a driving force within all people that can help them become a better person. Through dance, students will learn grace, success, and confidence that will be shown in other aspects of their lives.

We are a Non-Profit

Weehawken Creative Arts is a non-profit organization. We are successful because of you, your family, your friends, our volunteers, donors and patrons. Our community helps us grow and continue to provide the best quality programming.

About Weehawken Dance Classes

Student's placement in classes and workshops offered by WCA Dance is at the discretion of the WCA teaching staff and is subject to the approval of the Artistic Director. Our levels are based upon the guidelines of the American Ballet Theatre National Training Curriculum. This program is widely recognized in dance studios across America, providing a good reference for an individual student's accomplishment. Guidelines for levels are approximate and may vary according to the individual's experience, development, physical attributes, and/or the judgment of the teacher about a particular student's readiness for a designated level of work. If a teacher determines that a student's previous training has not prepared the student adequately for the level of work, the student may be asked to take a slower class.

About The American Ballet Theatre National Training Curriculum: Weehawken Dance is proud to include the AMERICAN BALLET THEATRE® NATIONAL TRAINING CURRICULUM, a breakthrough 8 level program that combines high quality artistic training with the basics of dancer health and child development. The ABT® National Training Curriculum consists of a comprehensive set of age-appropriate, outcome-based guidelines to provide the highest quality ballet training to dance students of all ages and skill levels. Primary through Level 7 will be taught by ABT® Certified Teacher, Natasha Pyeatte, who has successfully completed the ABT® Teacher Training Intensive in Primary through Level 7 of the ABT® National Training Curriculum.

Dance is a Performing Art

In addition to our dance training exercises; students have the opportunity to be a performer as well. Because dance is a performing art, we find performance an

important part of our program. Performance teaches dancers to work as a team, to be confident in front of an audience, to be proud of their accomplishments, in addition to boosting self-esteem. It also gives the parents a chance to see the improvement their child has made as a dancer over the semester.

- ● **We encourage all of our students to be in the performance, but participation is not mandatory.**
- ● **The deadline for students to contact WCA if they do not wish to be in the performance is the third week of class.**
- ● Students are expected to attend all classes for their level if they wish to participate in these performances.
- ● Students are expected to attend all rehearsals as well as a **mandatory** dress rehearsal.
- ● Please note: Each semester, there is a show fee for each class enrollment (number). This fee may vary from year to year.

Movement from Class will evolve into Movement on Stage

Performance choreography is the tool that we use to teach the curriculum of the class. Students will learn choreography during class time that incorporates the skills also taught during class time for each level. At the conclusion of the semester, we will have “tech week,” the week prior to the performance. This gives the students as well as all the behind the scenes helpers (lighting designers, music tech, stage managers, dressers, costumers, etc.) a chance to put the entire performance together. During the performance, students will showcase the choreography they have learned, which will include the different “steps” they have been learning in class. At Weehawken, education is of the utmost importance. Our performances are our way of showcasing what your dancer is learning in class.

Level Placement and New Student Placement

We use age as a starting point for determining your dancer’s class level. To decide when a student is ready for the next level teachers use proficiency, technique, maturity, talent and ability. Any deviations from the standard placement must go through an Authorized WCA teaching staff member. Please note that it is common for students to remain in a level for more than one year.

Attendance

Regular attendance to all classes is necessary in order to maintain progress. Students falling behind on their class work or technique may be asked to take a slower class if attendance is a problem.

- If a student misses class and therefore misses choreography class time with the instructor, it is up to the student to learn what they missed from another student.
- If the student chooses not to learn the missed choreography the teacher may decide to have them go off stage during the section of choreography they do not know, or may alter their choreography or placement in the dance.
- Students dancing lead roles in the show may lose the lead-role privilege if they miss too many classes or rehearsals. It is up to your dancer to make up what they miss.

- If you know you are going to be late or miss class, please let us know by calling Weehawken at 970-318-0150 (during business hours). If you know the week prior, please give your teacher a note to help them remember that the following week you will be late or missing.
- Failure to notify WCA of withdrawal from the show in timely manner will result in forfeit of show fee, and may impact placement and choreography in future shows.

Tardiness

- Dancers arriving late to class need to enter the classroom between exercises and show respect to the class and teacher by not being distracting.
- Students arriving late to class should plan to help the teacher “clean up” the studio at the end of class. This would include cleaning the mirrors, picking up lost and found, and closing the windows. If your dancer is late to class, please plan that they will stay the extra 5 minutes to help the teacher clean up.
- Parents arriving later than 10 minutes will be billed for student supervision. *Parents will be charged \$1 a minute for each minute the teacher is required to wait.* Under no circumstances are teachers to leave students unattended outside the building. This is a safety issue. Please be respectful of our teacher’s time.

How to Communicate with your dance teacher

Please e-mail your general Weehawken Questions to Trisha Oakland at programs@weehawkenarts.org.

For Class specific questions that you think only your teacher can answer, please e-mail them directly. If you do not have their e-mail address, please send your e-mail to Trish and she can forward to your teacher. In the subject line please put the name of your teacher and what class your dancer is enrolled in.

Weehawken staff and instructors do not use facebook messages, texts, or instagram to relay information to parents directly, as this is not a professional business method of communication. Please e-mail us and we will be sure to get the information, request or question to your teacher in a timely manner during Weehawken business hours.

Viewing Classes

Parents are not permitted to watch classes from inside the studio. We need the full space for the dancers, and parents can be distracting for students.

When the studio door is open we welcome parents to watch class from OUTSIDE the classroom. If students are distracted or we are working on show choreography we aren’t ready to show yet, the teacher will close the studio door and class will not be viewable.

Taking/Posting Pictures and Video

- After an absence: If approved by your teacher, you may videotape the last 5 minutes of choreography time the week you return from an absence so you may practice at home. *The video may NOT be posted to social media and are solely for the purpose*

of allowing your child to practice at home. Please check with your teacher before taking video during class.

- Posting to Social Media for fun: If you would like to take a video and post it to social media, please check with the teacher ahead of time for approval, and please tag Weehawken Dance in the video.

#weehawkendance @weehawkendance

Auditions for Lead Roles

We have auditions for our students for “special parts” or “lead roles” as decided on by the Artistic Director. Audition dates, prerequisites, roles, and number of “special parts” changes with each show, as each performance we do is unique.

All students must be currently enrolled in a Weehawken Dance class to be eligible to audition. Students hoping to be a lead role in the show **MUST** audition and plan to attend extra rehearsals in Montrose, Ridgway, and sometimes Ouray. Please note attendance and excellent communication regarding these rehearsals is required to be eligible for those roles. Please see audition packet for more information on where, when, and how to audition and what to expect for the upcoming semester’s performance. THOROUGH review of the audition information is critical.

Rehearsal overlap policy

With rehearsals and classes taking place in several communities, upper level and lead dancers may occasionally have a schedule overlap. In the case of an overlap, the Artistic Director and other instructors will decide which is the most important rehearsal for the dancer to attend and will be given an excused absence for the rehearsal or class missed. Dancers should notify the teacher or Artistic Director as soon as possible and they will make a decision in a timely manner.

Pointe Students

- **Going on Pointe:** Some Students may be able to begin pre-pointe and pointe work beginning in level III with approval from their ballet instructor and Artistic Director. *Under no circumstances may students wear pointe shoes or take a WCA pointe class without first being approved by an Authorized Instructor.* Pointe work can be very dangerous to students not properly prepared for pointe work. Pre-pointe is required for students the semester before beginning pointe. Summer classes are required for students going on pointe in the fall.
- **Students Continuing on Pointe:** Students must participate in at least 2 ballet technique classes per week in addition to pointe classes. Pointe can be very dangerous to students not maintaining proper technique, strength, and coordination. No exceptions. Students not maintaining proper conditioning or missing too many classes will be asked to not participate in pointe class. It’s up to you to show up to class ready to dance and to continue to recondition at home. If you are injured, you need to take a break from pointe.
- **Returning to Pointe:** *Students not dancing the previous semester (or in summer) will not be allowed to participate in the pointe section of class at the beginning*

of the semester. After 1 month the teacher will evaluate whether or not the student is ready to return to pointe class.

Studio Etiquette for Dancers

- Weehawken Dance Dress codes must be followed at every class.
 - No exceptions.
- Students not in dress code/uniform will be given 1 notice. On the second offence the dancer will be asked to not participate class for that day and will receive a pink slip.
- Please bring a water bottle, filled with water, with your name on it to each class.
- Please use the restroom BEFORE class begins
- Students may not leave class without permission from their instructor.
- Students will be respectful by listening during class and not talking.
- Students openly and regularly defying classroom behavior corrections from teachers may be removed from class without refund.
- All equipment is off-limits unless being utilized by class.
- Proper use of equipment during class is required.
- No cell phones during class.
- No food or drink (other than water) is permitted in the dance floor area.
- No chewing gum allowed.
- Pick up personal trash- including waiting areas outside of the classroom.

Student Behavior Consequences: Pink Slips

Students displaying inappropriate behavior will receive a pink slip. Pink slips may be issued for dress code violation, poor attendance, or behavior in or outside the class during classes or rehearsals. Students receiving 3 pink slips in the semester will be ineligible to perform in the upcoming performance and will be noted during future auditions for lead roles.

Students receiving pink slips will be given a verbal warning, and parents will be notified from the Weehawken office by e-mail.

Studio Etiquette for Parents/Guardians

- Parents are not allowed inside the classroom during class.
- Lobbies:
 - Montrose: Parents must keep volume to a minimum (library volume) if they remain in the hallway.
 - Ridgway: families are asked to no loiter in the common spaces of the building. This is a shared space with several other businesses, including a massage practice. Appropriate volume in common spaces is expected.
 - Ouray: Parents are welcome to sit in the lobby area upstairs, but must remove their shoes before going upstairs.
- Pickup:
 - Montrose: parents are expected to come into the space to pick up their child if the child is under 10.

- Ouray County: Students may not wait for parents on the street. They should stay inside and look out the windows for your arrival.
- Any student conflict during class time should be addressed directly with the instructor first, and then Weehawken administrative staff if unresolved.
- We request that parents having a significant conflict with another student or parent do not address those issues themselves. Please bring significant or ongoing issues with another student or parent to the instructor first. If the result or change is not satisfactory, please bring the issue to Weehawken's administrative team.
- There are many factors that influence the choices we make. You can be well assured that our students and the integrity of Weehawken Creative Arts is always taken into account. Artistic and preferential choices are made freely by our teachers and Artistic Director. Dance is an art, not a team sport.
- *Under no circumstances will criticism of teachers, scheduling, casting, costumes or choreography be tolerated.*
- If there is a real, legitimate concern, please notify the Director of Weehawken Creative Arts, Ashley King. Inappropriate emails or confrontations will be handled immediately with a warning letter to the involved parties. Continued interference will result in expulsion of both the student and the parent from Weehawken programs without refund.

Dress Code Policies

"Uniforms" put students in the correct state of mind to be able to focus and move properly as well as giving teachers the chance to see their bodies and give corrections as needed to create the best dancers possible, free of bad habits and technique.

- **Appropriate footwear must be worn for all classes.** Each class will be required to wear the shoe assigned for the performance as chosen by the teacher.
- **All female Ballet students primary level and up** must wear their hair up off their neck or in a bun. If hair is too short, they must wear hair back in clips or a headband.
- **All female Ballet Students Primary level and up** must wear their uniform to ballet class. During rehearsals students may wear other dance clothing, but no street clothing.
Acceptable rehearsal clothing: Leotard with tights, shorts, leggings, leg warmers, ballet skirt, tight fitting dance pants.
- **Male Ballet Dancers** may wear dance pants or tights and a shirt. Athletic clothing is acceptable. Jeans are not.
- **Jazz and Tap Students** may wear dance or athletic clothing. Jeans are not acceptable. Jazz shoes may be ANY style black jazz shoe on the market. Tap shoes may be any black tap shoe on the market. Weehawken does have a bucket of used tap shoes that families may opt to borrow for the semester (as available), but does not guarantee all students shoes.
- **Lyrical Jazz Students** may wear dance or athletic clothing. Jeans are not acceptable. Foot undeez, half soles or similar footwear may be worn.
- **Female Partnering students** need to wear a leotard and tights whenever practicing Pas de Deux. No leg warmers or excess baggy clothing. Dancers can get caught up in clothing and can result in a dancer getting dropped or falling.

- **Hip-Hop dancers** should wear hip-hop shoes (shoes specifically for dance class) and hair pulled out of the face. Hats encouraged!

For MONTROSE hip-hop classes: Black Flat Bottomed Sneakers (Black Converse work well), pants that cover the knees. Shoes used for class should not be used as street-shoes.

For RIDGWAY AND OURAY hip-hop classes: Black shoes with flat bottoms (like Converse) or jazz shoes. DANCE Shorts, preferably with tights. Dancers wearing shorts should carry knee protection in their dance bag for floor work (like knee pads or sweat pants). Hip Hop/Tap combo classes should plan to have TAP shoes. Shoes used for class should not be used as street-shoes.

- **Aerial and Circus Dance (silks, Lyra, Trapeze, etc.)** All Dancers in aerial must comply with the dress code. This is to prevent injury such a burns, to keep dancers safe and secure, and to protect the equipment. Dancers will often be upside down, and must dress accordingly. Ladies must wear a **sports bra** or leotard with a secure shelf bra. Leggings or tight fitting pants or tights that cover the back of the knee. **Absolutely no zippers or jewelry**, they can catch on the fabric and damage the equipment. No bare legs or stomachs. Dance tights with shorts is acceptable. Tops that cover the armpits are preferred. Shirts must be long enough to be tucked in securely. Keep a long sleeve shirt in your bag to wear for tricks that involve the silk being wrapped over arms. Hair must be pulled up and out of the face. Bring an extra hair tie to pull hair into a bun as needed.

Students not dressed appropriately may look through our used dancewear for clothing to borrow that day. After the second offense, the teacher may ask the student to not participate in class that day.

Aerial Dance Behavior Code

In addition to outlined studio etiquette, the following applies to aerial programs:

In order to keep your child safe during aerial, please discuss with them the following before their first class. Failure to follow the aerial behavior code will result in your child being expelled from the aerial program.

1. Safety First
2. Follow the dress code
3. Teacher knows best: Always follow the teacher's directions
4. Always learn tricks low first, go high after the teacher approves it
5. Never perform a trick without being over a mat
6. Follow your trick "check list"
7. Rough Housing, climbing too high without approval, practicing trick you aren't ready for, and student disrespect will not be tolerated in this class.
8. Students may not touch any equipment at the studio that is not being used during class.