

# **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** run through and dress rehearsal. Please note there is a recital fee for each performance and each semester this fee varies.

### **Movement from Class will evolve into Movement on Stage**

During the last 8 weeks of the semester, students will begin to learn choreography after technique work. This usually lasts for 20-30 minutes at the end of each class. 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, the 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.

### **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.

Our shows are for OUR students. We put these performances together to showcase the talent, ability, and training in our program. We do not allow students from other studios to audition for our shows. When you watch a Weehawken production you are witnessing the training and education we provide.

Students hoping to be a lead role in the show **MUST** audition and plan to attend extra rehearsals in Montrose, Ouray, Ridgway, and sometimes Silverton. Please see audition packet for more information on where, when, and how to audition and what to expect for the upcoming semester’s performance.

### **About Level Placement**

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. Please note that it is common for students to remain in a level for more than one year.

**Note for Upper Level Ballet Students:** Some Students may be able to begin pre-pointe and pointe work beginning in level III. *Under no circumstances may students wear pointe shoes or take a WCA pointe class without first being approved by the Artistic Director.* Pointe work can be very dangerous to students not properly prepared for pointe work.

### **For New Students**

New students will be placed in a class according to their age and experience. All age recommendations and level placements are at the discretion of the WCA teaching staff.

### **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 this 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. 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.

## **Taking/Posting Pictures and Video**

After an absence: If approved by your teacher, you may video tape 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 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.

## **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.

## **Studio Etiquette for Dancers**

- Proper shoes must be worn for all classes.
- Primary Level Ballet and up ladies must wear their hair in a bun. Long hair and bangs can affect “spotting” when learning and practicing turns. You will be helping your child achieve better turns by putting their hair in a bun.
- Students may not leave class without permission from their instructor.
- Students will be respectful by listening during class and not talking.
- No hanging or leaning on the ballet barres is permitted.
- 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.

## **Studio Etiquette for Parents/Guardians**

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 and not a team sport. *Under no circumstances will criticism of teachers, scheduling, casting, costumes or choreography be tolerated.* If there is a 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.

## **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.

- **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 Dancers** may wear dance pants or tights and a shirt. Athletic clothing is acceptable. Jeans are not.
- **Jazz and Tap Students** need to wear dance or athletic Clothing. Jeans will not be accepted.
- **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 Miss Val's hip hop classes: Black Flat Bottomed Sneakers, pants that cover the knees.*  
*For Miss Kendra's hip hop classes: Black shoes, preferable with flat bottoms or jazz shoes. Shorts are fine, but dancers should carry knee protection in their dance bag for floor work.*
- **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, and to keep dancers safe and secure. 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. Tank tops are fine, but must be able to be tucked in securely. Keep a long sleeve shirt in your bag to wear for ticks 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 offence, the teacher may ask the student to not participate in class that day.

### **Pointe Students**

Students must maintain 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.

Students not dancing the previous semester (or in summer) will not to 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.