



2024-2025

STUDENT & COMMUNITY HANDBOOK:
Policies, Guidelines, and Expectations

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WELCOME.

We are honored that you have chosen the Ballet Conservatory of South Texas (BCSTX) for your child's dance education. Our mission is to create a superior dance education experience in an atmosphere that emphasizes positive reinforcement, creativity, and promotes self-esteem. We provide the best training possible for both serious and recreational dancers.

Confidence on Stage Starts with a sense of Belonging in the Studio

BCSTX aspires to represent the diverse communities of San Antonio and create a collective voice through movement. We believe that a welcoming and inclusive studio can make a tangible difference in the art created and strengthen the connection between dancers and supporters. Ballet education provides access to the performing arts while building essential life skills.

Therefore, BCSTX is committed to actively building relationships with individuals and organizations not currently served by our program, consistently learning and evolving, and supporting all students to find their voice in the studio, on stage, and in life.

To uphold this mission, we have established a set of guidelines and policies that ensure a positive and respectful atmosphere for all members of our community. These guidelines are crucial in maintaining the standards of excellence, safety, and professionalism that define BCSTX. By adhering to these policies, we can collectively create an environment where every student can thrive and reach their full potential.

In this handbook, you will find important information about our organization, the academy's guidelines and policies, and a list of important dates for the 2024-2025 Performance Season.

Please read this information carefully and address any questions you may have with our office staff.

**BCSTX reserves the right to change, modify, or update any policies within this document at its discretion and without prior notice. These changes will be effective immediately upon their publication unless otherwise specified.*

GENERAL CONTACT INFORMATION

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GUIDELINES & EXPECTATIONS FOR THE BCSTX COMMUNITY-AT-LARGE

At BCSTX, every student has the right to learn and develop in a positive and respectful environment. We promote integrity, inclusion, kindness, respect, leadership, and discipline. These expectations extend to our community at large, and all members of the community are held to the same standards to ensure a supportive and nurturing atmosphere for everyone. The BCSTX community includes but is not limited to all staff, volunteers, students, families of students, including visitors and potential students and employees.

PROTOCOL FOR FAILURE TO ADHERE TO BCSTX POLICIES & GUIDELINES

Failure to adhere to the policies and standards outlined in this document will be reviewed per the protocols set forth by the Board of Directors and the Executive Team at BCSTX:

1. **Initial Consultation/Warning:** The Artistic Director or Executive Director, along with the Board Chair (if necessary), will meet with the parent(s)/guardian(s) and, if needed, the student(s) to identify the problem. Goals and new approaches to addressing the issue will be established. If the behavioral progress remains unsatisfactory, potential consequences will be discussed.
2. **Suspension:** If no progress is made after the initial consultation, the student may be suspended from the studio. Immediate suspension may occur if the student exhibits harmful behavior towards themselves or others. Parents will be notified if their child exhibits uncontrollable behavior that the instructor cannot manage, and they may be asked to take the child home immediately.
3. **Dismissal:** The studio reserves the right to cancel a student's enrollment for any of the following reasons:
 - a. Non-payment or excessive late payment of fees.
 - b. Failure to observe the studio rules
 - c. Physical and/or verbal abuse of staff or students by a parent or child
 - d. Sexual harassment of staff or students by a parent or child
 - e. Slander or defamation of staff or students by a parent or child

No refunds will be issued for dismissal

In addition, dismissal will be considered if the aforementioned action steps do not resolve the problem.

ANTI-BULLYING POLICY

At BCSTX, we are committed to maintaining a positive and respectful environment where every individual can learn and grow. Bullying in any form is strictly prohibited and will not be tolerated.

- **Definition of Bullying:** Bullying at BCSTX is defined as any behavior that:
 - Detrimentially targets another person.
 - Harms another individual.
 - Targets any actual or perceived characteristic.
 - Creates a hostile environment within the studio.
- **Forms of Bullying:**
 - Bullying can manifest in various forms, including but not limited to:
 - Direct Bullying: Physical actions such as hitting, pushing, or other forms of physical aggression.
 - Indirect Bullying: Actions that harm someone's social standing or relationships, such as spreading rumors or encouraging others to exclude someone.
 - Physical Bullying: Any form of physical harm or threat of physical harm.
 - Emotional Bullying: Actions that damage someone's self-esteem or emotional well-being.
 - Social Bullying: Behaviors that harm someone's social reputation or relationships, including exclusion or spreading false information.
 - Verbal Bullying: Hurtful comments, insults, teasing, or intimidation.
 - Written Bullying: Bullying through written means, including letters, notes, or any other written communication.
 - Electronic Bullying (Cyberbullying): Bullying through digital platforms, including social media, text messages, emails, or any other electronic communication.
- Any instance of bullying will be addressed promptly and may result in disciplinary action, up to and including dismissal from the studio.
- **Reporting and Protocols:**
 - Any instances of bullying should be reported to the appropriate authorities within the studio.
 - Reports will be taken seriously and investigated thoroughly.
- Failure to comply with this policy will result in protocols being initiated by the Board of Directors and the Executive Team.

ANTI-SLANDER POLICY

At BCSTX, we are dedicated to maintaining a respectful and positive environment for all members of our community. Slander in any form is strictly prohibited and will not be tolerated.

- **Definition of Slander:** Slander is defined as the action or crime of making a false spoken statement that damages a person's reputation. This includes any false and harmful statements made verbally about another individual.

- **Policy Enforcement:**
 - Disrespect or slander directed towards any parent, staff member, instructor, or student will result in an immediate meeting with the Artistic Director and the Board of Directors. Depending on the severity of the incident, dismissal from the studio may be considered.
 - Physical, mental, emotional, or cyberbullying by parents, staff, instructors, or students is also strictly prohibited and may result in dismissal from the studio.
 - If allegations are made and subsequently deemed untrue, the individual who made the false claims will face dismissal from the studio.

- **Protocols for Addressing Violations:**
 - Any instance of slander or disrespect should be reported immediately to the appropriate authorities within the studio.
 - Reports will be taken seriously and investigated thoroughly.
 - Failure to adhere to this policy will result in the initiation of protocols set forth by the Artistic Director and the Board of Directors.

OTHER PROHIBITED CONDUCT

Disciplinary proceeding may be initiated against a member of the BCSTX community for any of the following acts:

Harassment - Conduct that is sufficiently severe, pervasive, or persistent to create an objectively hostile environment that interferes with or diminishes the ability of an individual to participate in or benefit from the services, activities, or privileges provided by BCSTX.

Misconduct - Physical abuse, threats, intimidation, retaliation, unwanted and/or repetitive contact, coercion, and/or conduct that threatens or endangers the health or safety of any persons on any property controlled by BCSTX, or at any function, program, event, or assembly conducted, sponsored, supervised, or authorized by BCSTX.

Retaliation - Any adverse action (including, but not limited to, intimidation, threats, coercion, harassment, or discrimination) taken against someone because the individual has made a report or who has supported or provided information in connection with a report; or has participated or refused to participate in reporting misconduct.

Stalking - Engaging in a course of conduct directed at a specific person that would cause a reasonable person to fear for his, her, or their safety, or the safety of others, or suffer substantial emotional distress.

Theft & Damage - Taking unauthorized possession of or damaging any personal property of any BCSTX community member within the building controlled by BCSTX.

DISMISSAL POLICY

BCSTX reserves the right to cancel the enrollment of a student for any of the following reasons:

- Non-payment or excessive late payment of fees.
- Not observing the rules and policies of the academy.
- Physical and/or verbal abuse of staff or students by a parent or child.
- Sexual harassment of staff or students by a parent or child.
- Slander or defamation of staff or students by a parent or child.
- No refunds will be issued for dismissal by BCSTX.

USE OF CELL PHONES AND OTHER HANDHELD ELECTRONIC DEVICES

To ensure a high-quality training environment and a positive atmosphere, the following cell phone policy is enforced at BCSTX:

- Student cell phone use is strictly prohibited in studios, restrooms, locker rooms, and the lobby unless explicitly permitted by an instructor.
- Cell phones must be stored in the dancer's bag and set to silent mode.
- If a dancer is observed using a cell phone, they will be instructed to put it away.
- For recurring violations:
 - The instructor will confiscate the cell phone.
 - The student will retrieve their cell phone when they leave the studio for the day.
 - Failure to comply with this policy will result in protocols being initiated by the Board of Directors and the Executive Team.

FEES & TUITION PAYMENTS

As a 501(c)(3) non-profit organization, **BCSTX does not issue refunds**. All fees, including but not limited to tuition payments, performance fees, summer intensive, summer kids camp, summer classes, seasonal workshops, master classes, adult class cards, and ticket purchases are non-refundable.

Annual Registration Fee:

- A **\$50 per household** will be charged for all new and returning students. This fee is applied to the performance season. The fee is waived for summer programming and adult class cards.

End of Year Academy Showcase Performance Fee:

- **\$130 per student paid annually** and is scheduled to be automatically withdrawn from your account on **January 8, 2025**.
- If your child will not participate in the End of Year Academy Showcase, written notification must be provided to our office staff no later than **January 6, 2025**.
- Refunds will not be issued for withdrawal from classes or withdrawal from the production after the performance fee deadline.

Tuition Payments:

- **Monthly Installments:** Monthly installments are due on the 1st of each month and will be automatically drafted from your account. **A late fee of \$25 will be assessed to accounts that have not been paid by the 5th of the month.**
- Accounts must be current and have a \$0.00 balance before the student can participate in performances, receive a costume, or participate in private lessons.
- Instructors cannot accept tuition payments.

Tuition Discounts:

- We offer a **5% Semester Discount** if you opt to pay for each semester in full at the start of the semester. The payment must be in a lump and the discount will be applied.
- We offer a **10% Family Discount** on tuition for each additional family member. The discount will be applied to the tuition of the lower-priced enrollment. Please note that this discount does not extend to performance fees.
- We also offer a 10% Military Discount to military families. This discount does not apply to summer classes, summer intensive, summer kids camp, master classes, workshops, performance fees, etc.

WITHDRAWAL

- If a parent wishes to withdraw their dancer from classes prior to the end of the season, written notification must be provided before the anticipated withdrawal date. The withdrawal process will be completed after all outstanding tuition and fees have been paid in full.

ARRIVAL & DEPARTURE PROCEDURES

For your child's safety:

- Escort students ages 7 years of age and under in and out of the building.
- Upon arrival, students should:
 - Quietly prepare for class.
 - Assemble quietly outside their assigned studio until invited by their instructor.
- Students in Ballet IV and above may:
 - Quietly enter an empty studio to warm up for class.
 - Arrange for prompt pick-up as our staff cannot be responsible for watching your child after class.
- Do not drop off your dancer more than 30 minutes before their class starts. Our staff cannot be responsible for watching your child before class begins.
- Students being picked up after class should:
 - Wait quietly in the lobby until their parent(s) caregiver arrives.
- Students are not allowed to:
 - Wait outside.
 - Leave the premises until collected by their parent(s) or caregiver.
- Students with classes in Studio C must:
 - Wait in the main lobby until their instructor or a staff member escorts them to Studio C.
 - Note that parents are NOT allowed inside Studio C.

IN-STUDIO VISITOR ETIQUETTE & GUIDELINES

- **Do not interrupt class under any circumstance.** Coordinate with our office staff if a message needs to be delivered to your student or their instructor during class. If your student must leave class early, ask one of our staff members for assistance.
- Only staff, faculty, and students in Ballet IV and above are allowed to enter empty dance studios. Parents, siblings, and friends are NOT allowed to enter empty studios for any reason.
- Adults and children waiting in the lobby should conduct themselves quietly and respectfully. **Loud games, running, or horseplay in the lobby or hallways will not be tolerated.**

- **Please avoid loud phone conversations in our lobby and hallways.** If you need to make or receive a call, step outside to limit distractions to our students and staff.

GUIDELINES FOR PHYSICAL CONTACT

At BCSTX, we are committed to providing individualized, hands-on training in a safe and respectful environment. It is appropriate for a faculty member, visiting faculty, or hired professional to manually position a student to demonstrate a point of instruction or to correct their technique during class. This hands-on approach is intended to enhance the learning experience and support the development of proper technique.

Guidelines for Physical Contact:

- **Respect and Professionalism:** All physical contact must be respectful, professional, and directly related to the instruction being provided.
- **Appropriate Boundaries:** Physical contact should be limited to areas of the body relevant to the instruction and should avoid any areas that could be considered inappropriate or invasive.
- **Minimizing One-on-One Contact:** Whenever possible, instruction that requires physical contact should be conducted in the presence of others, such as during group classes or with another staff member or student present. Private, one-on-one instruction that involves physical contact should be avoided unless absolutely necessary and must occur in a transparent and observable setting.

Reporting Concerns:

- Students and parents are encouraged to report any concerns regarding physical contact to the appropriate authorities within BCSTX.
- Confidentiality and Sensitivity: Reports will be handled with confidentiality and sensitivity to ensure the safety and well-being of all students.

CLASS PREPARATION, ETIQUETTE & CONDUCT

Before Class:

- Arrive at least 15 minutes before class to dress appropriately, secure hair, store belongings neatly, and prepare for the session.
- Gather quietly outside your assigned dance studio while waiting for the instructor.
- Parents/Caregivers of beginner-level students: Ensure your dancer uses the bathroom before class to minimize disruptions and prevent accidents.

- Students must be properly hydrated before class. Intermediate and Upper Division students may bring spill-proof water containers into the dance studios.
- It is the responsibility of the students, not the instructors, to be present and ready; instructors will not seek out students in bathrooms, dressing rooms, etc.
- Notify the school office if your student will be absent or late.

During Class:

- Late arrivals must wait for instructor permission to enter the studio. If not properly stretched and warmed-up, students may be asked to observe to prevent injury.
- Do not hang from or lean on ballet barres.
- No talking, yawning, or horseplay during class.
- Chewing gum and food are strictly prohibited in the dance studios.
- Street shoes are not permitted inside the dance studios.
- Maintain focus during class by giving eye contact and attention to the instructor.
- Listen and apply corrections appropriately.
- Do not stop in the middle of an exercise unless injured.
- Always do your best and maintain a positive attitude.
- Show respect to classmates, instructors, and staff.
- Gossiping, name-calling, and destruction or theft of property are not tolerated.
- Only water bottles are allowed inside the studios

After Class:

- Show appreciation by verbally thanking and applauding instructors at the end of class.
- Exit class quietly as other classes may be in session.

DRESSING ROOM ETIQUETTE

To keep our facilities clean, safe, and organized:

- Dressing rooms are designated for changing clothes and using restroom facilities.

- Dressing rooms and restrooms are not to be used for socializing.
- Upper Division dancers are permitted to use the dressing rooms for breaks and warm-ups.
- Students are expected to clean up after themselves and neatly store their belongings in the available cubbies.
- Lockers will be assigned to senior company dancers for secure storage.

CLOTHING & HAIR ETIQUETTE (ALL AGES)

- Dancers must wear clothing that covers their leotards when entering and exiting the premises (e.g., shorts, sweatpants, t-shirts, jackets).
- No bare feet allowed.
- Nail polish is not permitted and must be removed.
- Do not wear ballet shoes outside to prevent damage and contamination of studio floors.
- Adhere to the assigned uniform for your class level.
- Only small stud earrings are allowed; other jewelry must be removed.
- **Tights:** Must follow the uniform dress code and be free of runs and tears.
- **Shoes:** Soft ballet shoes should have securely sewn elastics, with adjustable elastics tied and tucked in. Pointe shoes must have securely sewn elastics, laces, and ribbons with loose ends tucked in.
- **Hair:**
 - Should be in a neat, classical ballet bun with plenty of hairpins.
 - A hairnet matching the dancer's hair color is recommended for class and required for performances.
 - Loose wisps of hair should be sprayed down.
 - Students 6 and under may wear bangs that do not cover their eyes.
 - Hair too short for a bun should be pulled back and secured with a headband or hair tie.

CLASS CANCELLATIONS

- In the event of inclement weather, BCSTX will follow the Alamo Heights Independent School District's closures.
- When conditions beyond our control occur, we reserve the right to cancel classes while making our best effort to notify those students affected.
- Families may be notified via text message in the event of a school closure or emergency. Information pertaining to cancellations and studio closures will also be posted via social media.

MAKING UP MISSED OR CANCELED CLASSES

- Tuition will not be pro-rated or discounted if a student is absent from class.
- Students are strongly encouraged to make up missed classes by attending another class offered in their level or a level below.
- Students or parents must contact the studio office staff to schedule a make-up class.

PRIVATE LESSONS

- Private lessons are optional and offered at the discretion of the parent and student. To request private lessons, communication between the instructor and Artistic Director is required in order to establish proper objectives and duration.

PARENT OBSERVATION WEEK

Parents will have an opportunity to observe their student's class from inside the studio twice each year in December and April. Please review the calendar for these dates.

INDIVIDUAL YEAR-END CONFERENCES

Near the end of the academic year, students in Ballet I through Ballet VI have the opportunity to schedule a one-on-one conference with the Artistic Director. These meetings are designed to review the student's progress and identify areas for further improvement.

LOST & FOUND

- BCSTX cannot be held responsible for lost, misplaced, or stolen items.
- Please label your student's belongings to ensure items left behind can be identified and promptly returned.
- Please ask for permission from a member of our staff before searching through the Lost & Found.
- Items in the Lost & Found that remain unclaimed will be donated to a charitable organization at the end of each month.

BIRTHDAY CELEBRATIONS

We understand that birthdays are very special. Please do not bring any treats (i.e. cupcakes, cookies, party favors, etc.) into the studio. We are happy to recognize students by singing "Happy Birthday" to them after class.