



Saratoga Springs Youth Ballet

School Handbook

This guide will help to make your years at Saratoga Springs Youth Ballet positive ones. We are committed to providing excellent dance education to your child. If you have any questions or concerns, please let us know. Nearly everything you need to know can be found here and on the website at www.saratogaspringsyouthballet.org

The Saratoga Springs Youth Ballet is committed to each student's success in learning within a caring, responsive, and safe environment that is free of discrimination, violence, and bullying. Saratoga Springs Youth Ballet does not discriminate based on race, color, sex, pregnancy, religion, national origin, ethnicity, disability, age, sexual orientation, gender identity, gender expression, marital status, status as a member of the military, or status as a military veteran. We work to ensure that all students have the opportunity and support to develop to his/her/their fullest potential and share a personal and meaningful bond with the people in our dance community.

Respect for teachers, parents and peers will be expected at all times. Bullying will not be tolerated. Dancers behaving inappropriately will be asked to leave the class, and parents will be contacted. Proper disciplinary action will be taken if necessary.

Saratoga Springs Youth Ballet is a 501(c)(3) non-profit that is committed to providing quality professional dance training to pre-professional students throughout the Greater Saratoga region. Students achieve their potential as dancers and artists while learning in a collaborative environment. A focus is put on building self-confidence and maturity in a nurturing atmosphere with an emphasis on performance and positive reinforcement. Dancers learn the value of hard work and garner an appreciation and love for the arts.

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1. Attendance

Dancers are expected to meet the required minimum of classes for their level.

If your child will be absent or late, please call or email to let the office know. If your child is more than 15 minutes late and the office is not notified, your child may not be permitted to dance. This is for the safety of the dancer and to maintain the focus of the class.

Dancers who have poor attendance do not progress. Perfect attendance is ideal. Good attendance must be maintained. As class size is limited, your space in class may be lost to a dancer on the waiting list if adequate attendance is not met. If more than 3 unexcused absences occur within a quarter, a meeting with the Directors will take place.

2. Calendar

All calendar dates including vacations and upcoming events are listed on the website under the "Classes" tab: www.saratogaspringsyouthballet.org/classes

3. Classroom Etiquette

- Arrive at the school with enough time to change if needed and prepare for class. It is recommended for the Children's Division to arrive no more than 5 to 10 minutes ahead of class. Dancers in the Pre-Professional Division should arrive 10 to 15 minutes before class. Any student arriving late is asked to wait until the current exercise is finished before entering the class with permission from the instructor. Please enter the studio quickly and quietly so as not to disrupt the class.
- If your child needs to leave early, let the teacher know before class begins.
- Dancers are not leave the premises between classes without adult supervision or permission.
- Dancers and parents are asked to treat the studio as if it was their home. Clean up all messes and throw out any food or garbage in the provided trash bins.
- No gum, food, or drinks other than water, are allowed in the studio.
- Send your child to class with a water bottle labeled with their name.
- Please leave cell phones and electronic devices (including smart watches) at home. The use of cell phones in the studios is prohibited.
- No outdoor shoes in the studios. No running or yelling inside. Refrain from touching the mirrors or hanging off the barres.
- Theft of any kind will not be tolerated and may lead to dismissal.
- Label all belongings and leave valuables at home. SSYB cannot be held responsible for any lost belongings. Check the lost and found box.
- No swearing or foul language. No smoking, vaping, use of alcohol, or illegal substances.



4. Communication

The best way to communicate with us is by email at info@saratogaspringsyouthballet.org during regular business hours. Someone will get back to you as soon as possible on the next regular business day during regular business hours. We prefer not to communicate over social media platforms. Email is best!

5. Dance Bag Packing List

Children's Division (Label all belongings)

- Ballet slippers
- Water Bottle
- Hair supplies
- Dance sweater (During cold months)
- Ballet skirt (Optional)

Pre-Professional Division (Label all belongings)

- Ballet Slippers, Jazz shoes, Pointe Shoes (If applicable)
- Water Bottle
- Extra Leotard and tights
- Hair supplies
- Skirt (Optional)
- Dance Journal

Leave at Home

- Cell Phones
- Electronics
- Jewelry
- Watches

6. Dress Code

Dancers must be dressed in proper attire for every class. Dress code requirements must be met. All clothing and shoes should be marked with the student's name.

- Nails should be kept short.



- Students may not wear jewelry, including watches and rings in class. Small, pierced earrings are acceptable.
- Dancers should wear dress code for rehearsals.
- Tights and leotards provide adequate coverage for dancers. Undergarments are not necessary unless needed for support.

Visit www.saratogaspringsyouthballet.org/classes#dresscode for full dress code by level.

7. Drop off/Pick-up

When arriving at the studio, dancers can be dropped off at the main entrance. Parents/Guardians do not stay in the lobby during classes or rehearsals. Dancers can be collected at the main entrance.

At SSYB, we believe in the importance of building a child's self-esteem by developing self-reliance. A self-reliant individual possesses good problem-solving skills, high self-esteem, positive interactions with others, independence, ability to make decisions, & a sense of security even when alone.

Of course, we start with age-appropriate steps. We ask that parents and guardians help to encourage their child's self-reliance by waiting outside the studio to give their young child the opportunity to get ready for class by themselves. We will have a teacher and teacher assistant that can help them, if necessary, but usually kids learn very fast. Of course, you may come into the front office if your child is having a difficult day and needs extra assurance.

8. Inclement Weather Policy

In the event of inclement weather, updates will be emailed and posted on the website and social media. SSYB does not necessarily follow the same cancellations of Saratoga or Ballston Spa School Districts.

9. Make-up Classes

Students are encouraged to make-up missed classes in an equal level or lower. Inquire with your teacher or Director to set up and schedule ahead of time. Classes cannot be substituted or interchanged. Make up classes do not transfer into the summer session or the next school year.

10. Parent/Guardian Code of Conduct

Saratoga Springs Youth Ballet strives to provide all young dancers with exceptional role models in a healthy and encouraging environment. Therefore, parents should always exhibit exemplary behavior at the studio and performances, providing support and encouragement for all dancers and spectators in a positive manner. Parents are to be considerate of all dancers and parents' collective emotions and refrain from making any disparaging remarks or publicly criticizing teachers, class placement, or other students. Anyone behaving in this manner will be asked to leave the premises.

- Communicate regularly with the school. Ensure that the student attends class regularly, in uniform and on time. Inform the school promptly about any absences or late arrivals. Please leave a message if no one can take your call.
- Ensure to pick up students in a timely manner after the end of class.
- Encourage and help your child to follow the student code of conduct. Help school staff deal with disciplinary issues involving your child. Do not interrupt classes while in progress.
- Please make an appointment if you wish to book a meeting with a teacher or Director. The best way to do this is through email to info@saratogaspringsyouthballet.org.
- Refrain from posting pictures and videos to social media that contain children other than your own without permission from his/her/their parent or guardian. Absolutely No videography of class or choreography.
- Keep your child at home if they exhibit any of the following:
- Any symptoms are present such as Fever of at least 100.4°F, Vomiting, Diarrhea, Coughing/Sneezing, Hospital Stay/Sick Visit to the Doctor.
- Rash, Head Lice, or Pink Eye.
- A confirmed positive case of Covid-19 or ongoing exposure to a household member who has a confirmed case of Covid-19.

11. Performances

There are many performance and outreach opportunities throughout the school year. See the calendar section of the website for specific dates each year.

- The Nutcracker Tea- *November*. Selected dances from the production.
- The Nutcracker- *December*. All dancers in level Pre-Ballet and up.
- Library, Museum, and Outreach performances- *Year-round*. Selected dancers.
- Gwendolyn and the Graceful Pig- *Spring*. Dancers in level IV, V, & VI.
- Regional Dance America Festival- *Spring*- Selected dancers level V & VI.
- Festival of Young Artists- *June*. Selected dancers in level II and up.
- Spring Concert- *June*- All dancers will perform with their class/level.

12. Placement & Casting

- Dancers are placed in the level that is the best fit for their age and ability. If you are new to the studio, we may ask your child to take a trial or placement class. Class placement is at the discretion of the Artistic Directors. This is done with careful consideration and the child's best interests in mind.
- Each role is important and necessary to produce a dance performance. Part of every dancer's development is to experience many different types of roles. We expect the dancer to respect any and every role they earn. There are some years that dancers will repeat the same role, and this should not be taken as an insult, but as an opportunity to perform the role with more maturity and confidence. Professional dancers perform the same roles hundreds of times night after night. Repetition is part of dance.
- Dancers should not anticipate or expect specific casting decisions. Although a dancer or parent may feel they or their dancer are deserving of a more prominent role, these decisions are at the discretion of the Directors, faculty, and/or the choreographer.
 - a. Nutcracker- Dancers are evaluated in the first weeks of classes to determine casting for the production. A dancer may be cast as an understudy. It is important to learn this role as diligently as the primary dancer. There have been many times that a dancer has sustained an injury or has been unable to fulfill their commitment. Understudies are expected to be at all of these rehearsals (Unless otherwise specified) as well as their primary roles.
 - b. Spring Concert- All dancers will perform with their class and/or level.
 - c. New Ballets/Choreography- When a new ballet is being developed, the choreographer is given absolute autonomy in choosing which dancers they would like to cast.

13. Regional Dance America

RDA is a national organization of over 92 dance companies, which are divided into five regions throughout the United States. To become a member of RDA the organization must have 501(c)3 non-profit organization status, produce two major concerts annually, and meet various other technical and artistic standards.

Each year SSYB welcomes guest choreographers to work with dancers in Levels V & VI. In the spring, an RDA Adjudicator visits each member company. Their tour includes watching a company class and selected choreographic works that are to be evaluated and potentially selected for the festival performance. The festival, which brings together 300 dancers from the northeast region, is held annually in the late spring. Approximately every 7 years, a national festival is held that unites 1500 dancers from all over the country.

RDA is not a competition, but an enriching opportunity for performing, critique and growth for all dancers, directors and educators who attend. Board members, adjudicators and instructors of RDA, are professionals currently active or who have formally held high profile positions with



nationally recognized dance organizations. For more information about Regional Dance America, please visit the [RDA Website](#).

In 2020, Regional Dance America initiated its Associate Plan to connect RDA directors, dancers, faculty, choreographers, families, and alumni. By becoming an RDA Associate, you gain access to RDA's year-round offerings, news, masterclasses, and connectivity to all the opportunities RDA has to offer.

Any level SSYB student or parent can become an [RDA Associate](#).

14. Sexual Harassment Policy

Saratoga Springs Youth Ballet wants all students to learn in an environment free from all forms of sexual harassment. Sexual harassment is against state and federal laws. It is unwelcome sexual attention from peers, teachers, staff, or anyone with whom the victim may interact. Any student who believes that he/she/they has been subjected to sexual harassment should report the alleged misconduct immediately to his/her/their teacher, School Director, or any responsible individual with whom the student feels comfortable, either informally or through the filing of a formal complaint. (Complaint form can be found at the back of the handbook and available at front desk). Saratoga Springs Youth Ballet will notify the parents of all students involved in sexual harassment by student(s) when the allegations are not minor and will notify parents of any incident of sexual harassment or sexual abuse by an employee.

The complaint form for reporting sexual harassment can be found at the end of this handbook.

15. Support Us

Some of SSYB's yearly expenses include theater rental, lighting design, costumes, contracted professional dancers and guest artists, master classes, performance/enrichment opportunities, scholarship fund, summer intensive and more.

Ways to help include:

1. Tax-deductible corporate and private donations
2. Company Matching Gift programs.
3. Funding/Sponsoring productions & scholarships

Visit our donations page here: <https://www.saratogaspringsyouthballet.org/donate>

We are always looking for experienced grant writers, and anyone who is familiar with sponsorship and fundraising. We are interested in your thoughts, proposals and suggestions. Email us at info@saratogaspringsyouthballet.org



16. Tuition and Fees

Saratoga Springs Youth Ballet does not charge audition, performance, or costume fees like most schools around the region and country. An annual non-refundable Registration fee of \$10 is charged.

1. The school year runs September through June. Tuition is divided equally into 4 payments (Regardless of how many weeks are in each month). Quarterly payments are due by the 1st lesson of each quarter (September, November, January, and April). Tuition paid in full at the beginning of the year will receive a 10% discount. There is a \$25 fee for returned checks. A reminder will be emailed ahead of each quarterly due date.
2. A 10% Sibling discount is applied to the child with the fewest number of classes per family. This does not apply to cousins or other such extended family. *Note: Please ask us for coupon code before checkout
3. Absolutely no credits, refunds, or adjustments will be given for missed lessons or weather-related cancellations.
4. If tuition is paid for the full year and the dancer withdraws from classes for any reason (loss of interest, school obligations, injury, illness, etc.), a 30% penalty will be applied to the refund for the remainder of the year. Quarterly installments will not be eligible for refunds, pro-rating, or adjustments. Registrations that occur in the middle of a quarter will not be pro-rated.
5. Notice must be given in writing in the event of a withdrawal from class.
6. Accounts must be kept current to participate in classes and performances.
7. Saratoga Springs Youth Ballet has the right to refuse service to anyone.

SUMMER TUITION Cancellation and Refund Policy: The registration fee is non-refundable. There are no refunds once you have begun the program, and no refunds will be given for any absences. SSYB reserves the right to cancel any of the Summer Programs if the enrollment is insufficient. In such a case, students will receive a full refund.

17. Volunteers

SSYB is a non-profit organization that relies heavily on its volunteers. There are many ways for you to support SSYB as a volunteer including volunteer coordinator, costumes/sewing, fundraising, committee chairs, technical crew, backstage, advertising, scenery/set design, ushering, ticket sales, chaperoning, theater load in & out, and more. The support of our SSYB school community is vital to our success and future growth. If everyone helps a little, then a great deal can be accomplished. We appreciate your help in whatever way you can.



COMPLAINT FORM FOR REPORTING SEXUAL HARASSMENT

Saratoga Springs Youth Ballet

New York State Labor Law requires all employers to adopt a sexual harassment prevention policy that includes a complaint form to report alleged incidents of sexual harassment. If you believe that you have been subjected to sexual harassment, you are encouraged to complete this form and submit it to a School Director. You will not be retaliated against for filing a complaint. If you are more comfortable reporting verbally or in another manner, your director should complete this form, provide you with a copy and follow its sexual harassment prevention policy by investigating the claims as outlined at the end of this form.

For additional resources, visit: www.ny.gov/programs/combating-sexual-harassment

COMPLAINANT INFORMATION

Name: _____

Address: _____

Phone: _____

Email: _____

Select Preferred Communication Method: Email Phone In person

COMPLAINT INFORMATION

1. Your complaint of Sexual Harassment is made about:

Name: _____

Title: _____

School Address: _____

Phone: _____

Relationship to you: Supervisor Student Other



2. Please describe what happened and how it is affecting you and your work. Please use additional sheets of paper if necessary and attach any relevant documents or evidence.

3. Date(s) sexual harassment occurred: _____

Is the sexual harassment continuing? Yes No

4. Please list the name and contact information of any witnesses or individuals who may have information related to your complaint: The last question is optional but may help the investigation.

5. Have you previously complained or provided information (verbal or written) about related incidents? If yes, when and to whom did you complain or provide information? If you have retained legal counsel and would like us to work with them, please provide their contact information.

Signature: _____

Date: _____

Adoption of this policy does not constitute a conclusive defense to charges of unlawful sexual harassment. Each claim of sexual harassment will be determined in accordance with existing legal standards, with due consideration of the particular facts and circumstances of the claim, including but not limited to the existence of an effective anti-harassment policy and procedure.