EASTERN CONNECTICUT BALLET

HANDBOOK 2025-2026

The purpose of this handbook is to outline Eastern Connecticut Ballet's policies and procedures, enabling students and families to enjoy a rich and fulfilling educational experience. We put our students first, and these rules and guidelines are for the safety and welfare of all.

SCHOOL PROFILE

Eastern Connecticut Ballet is a school; one whose expert faculty is dedicated to the development and growth of its students. The curriculum taught at ECB is based on strong classical technique, emphasizing the energy, movement and precision essential to meet the demands of today's classical ballet and contemporary companies. Every student at ECB will receive a quality education that will challenge them to reach their full potential.

HOW ECB VIEWS TRAINING-

We teach our students to aspire to excellence, a philosophy that drives everything we do. Educating dancers is our primary mission, but we also cultivate the appreciation of dance in our communities.

There are children who display talent and drive beyond their years. As it is with talented athletes and academics, there are students who rise above the rest, and should be rewarded and encouraged to make this their career. It is also important to understand that students who take the maximum required lessons will progress at a faster rate.

Passion, commitment, a strong work ethic, and good attendance are valued but do not necessarily guarantee desired roles. All roles are valuable, producing a rich artistic product– a rewarding educational experience.

Staff and the Artistic Director will make decisions regarding level placement and performance roles.

HOW WILL MY DANCER BE PLACED?

Registered students between the ages of 3 & 6 are placed in developmentally appropriate classes based on age within our Children's Division. (Pre Ballet 1, Pre- Ballet 2, First Steps)

CONTACT

860-739-7899

office@ easternctballet.org

435 Boston Post Road-
East Lyme, CT 06333

easternctballet.org

FOLLOW

EXECUTIVE & ADMIN STAFF

Ashley Bouder
Krystin Dixon
Julie Wright
Laura Barnard
Dawn King
Emily Benzi

ARTISTIC STAFF

Gloria Govrin
Ashley Bouder
Laura Barnard
Krystin Dixon
Jeremy Cox
Marc Spielberger
Julie Wright
Bo Parish
Alison Charbonnier
Emily Benzi
Amy Rolfe
Christine Finch

Students age 7 and above are placed in our Classical Ballet Program (Levels 1-8) according to their ballet experience and ability. *New students may be asked to take a placement class to determine class level.*

Placement in Levels 1-8 (Classical Ballet Program) is based solely on ability, NOT age.
The classes are taught to the ability of the students present.

HOW IS TUITION CHARGED?

ALL families must register through the JackRabbit Parent Portal. ALL accounts must have a credit card on file. Families may pay by either by CC, check, or cash. If using your CC on file, you may select an autopay option in your account.

Tuition for students enrolled in PRE BALLET 1 & PRE BALLET 2 is due on the FIRST day of their class for that term (Sept & Feb).

Students enrolled in MULTIPLE classes per week in levels First Steps & 1-8 are on a
9 MONTH INSTALLMENT PAYMENT PLAN. (September- May)

Each installment is due on the FIRST of the month starting with September.
The 9 installments cover the entire 10-month season: Sept.-June.
Installments are paid -Sept, Oct, Nov, Dec, Jan, Feb, Mar, Apr & May. NO JUNE.

The school year is divided into TWO terms, (Sept- Jan & Feb-June). The Holiday/Vacation schedule is NOT included in the tuition of either term.

DOES ECB OFFER ADULT CLASSES? HOW ARE THEY CHARGED?

We sure do! Known for our commitment to inspiring students of all ages, our adult program offers a variety of dance and fitness classes designed to meet personal, physical, and artistic goals. Our experienced, professional faculty is dedicated to educating and challenging each dancer in a friendly and supportive environment.

Adult students purchase DANCE CARDS (5 or 10 class cards) allowing the flexibility of only paying for the classes you are able to attend.

LATE FEES/DISCOUNTS/RETURNED CHECK FEES/REGISTRATION FEES

A $10.00 late fee will be assessed if tuition is more than 10 days late. Please note: a $10.00 late fee will also be assessed if costume, company dues, or performance fees are more than 30 days late.

No one may take class unless registration is complete, and tuition is paid. Students will not be permitted to begin a new term if there is an outstanding balance.

All checks returned for Insufficient Funds will be issued a $ 25.00 charge.

Parents with more than one child enrolled at ECB will receive a 10% discount for each additional child discount taken off the lesser tuition amount.

Refunds are only given for documented extended illnesses, class cancellation, or a family relocation.

All new and returning families will be charged a $55.00 annual registration fee that covers Sept.-Aug.

DOES ECB OFFER FINANCIAL AID?

Students will only be considered for financial assistance after an application and all required documents are submitted. A Confidential Financial Assistance Form can be requested from the office, by speaking to Krystin Dixon.

Recipients are expected to be model students and attend ALL recommended classes for their level. Family details will be outlined in your personal scholarship letter. Parents & families are expected to volunteer when available.

IS THERE A DRESS CODE AT ECB?

Dancers should attend class in their required uniform. ALL ballet slippers must be leather. Please see individual level sections on the website for each levels required uniform style/color.

All dancers must have their hair pulled back off their face into a tight, secure ballet bun using pins and hairnets.

GIRLS: On Saturdays, Levels 6, 7 & 8 are allowed to wear a leotard color of their choice. No tee shirts, shorts, sweats, baggy warm-ups or plastic pants are permitted. Tights must be worn under leotards and no footless tights will be allowed. During extremely cold winter weather, leg warmers and ballet sweaters will be allowed. These may only be worn at the beginning of the barre and must be removed when the teacher determines it is appropriate. At the teachers discretion, short skirts may be worn for pointe class (Levels 6, 7 & 8). NO jewelry may be worn except small earrings.

BOYS: (Levels Pre 1 –Lvl 4) White fitted shirt, black fitted shorts, black socks, and black ballet shoes. (Levels 5-8) White fitted shirt or white short sleeve leotard, black tights, black sock and black shoes No loose shirts, loose shorts/pants, sweats, baggy warm-ups or plastic pants are permitted.

WHAT IF MY CHILD BECOMES INJURED DURING THE SEASON?

In case of illness, injury or other problems- please contact the office immediately. ANY extended illness or injury requires a doctor's note. All dancers must be able to take a FULL class AND present a doctor's release note, in order to participate in rehearsal or performances (for safety reasons).
The final decision as to whether a dancer will be able to perform will be made by the Artistic Director.

WHAT IS THE ATTENDANCE COMMITMENT?

Like most activities and skills, ballet requires consistent attendance. Lack of attendance may also impact a student's placement for the next academic year. If your child or family is experiencing any extenuating circumstances that are resulting in missed classes, please contact the teacher so that the school can take your situation into consideration.

WHAT IF MY CHILD MISSES CLASS?

If your child is absent from class please call (860-739-7899) or email the school (office@easternctballet.org to communicate the absence to the office staff/teacher.

ECB recommends that missed classes be made up in order for students to maintain their technical level. Make-up classes must be taken in the level below their assigned class.

WILL CLASSES EVER BE COMBINED?

Please understand that, on occasion, classes may have to be combined for staffing or rehearsal purposes. This practice is customary in all ballet schools.

CLASS CONDUCT AND TARDINESS EXPECTATIONS

All members of the ECB community are expected to show respect at all times to teachers, choreographers, directors, staff members, parents and fellow students. Disrespect of any kind will result in dismissal from ECB's program.

Any dancer who arrives more than 15 minutes late to class will be asked to observe. That class may be made up.

Students must be picked up immediately after class or rehearsal. Staff will not remain more than 15 minutes after class/rehearsal.If there is an emergency, please call the school.

DROP OFF AND PICK UP PROCEDURES

Traffic in the parking lot can become quite heavy. Parents must park, then escort children safely to and from the building. Please ENTER the parking lot on the right side (mailbox) and EXIT on the left. Should the front parking lot become full, additional parking is available behind the building, which is well lit. Please be safe and use common sense at all times.

CELL PHONE USE

Students must leave cell phones on silent and in the dressing room at all times. Students are not permitted to check cell phones during class.

STUDENT & FAMILY CODE OF CONDUCT

Students shall not smoke, drink or use drugs. Any dancer who is caught by any authoritative figure with cigarettes, drugs, and/or alcohol, will be removed from the school. Any dancer appearing on the computer (i.e. Facebook, Instagram, SnapChat, TicTok) in a picture or video that includes cigarettes, drugs, and/or alcohol will be put on probation, and may be removed from the school.

Any dancers or parents caught speaking poorly of another parent, dancer, teacher, or the school through conversation, video, text, or social media will be subject to appropriate discipline. ECB has NO tolerance for this type of behavior from students or parents.

Students shall not use profanity while at ECB.

No video footage of any ECB dancers or choreography may be placed on the Internet.

Anyone unable to adhere to this policy will be subject to dismissal.

PARENT AND ECB COMMUNICATION

We are here to support you and your dancer. We have an open-door policy when it comes to communication.

If the need arises to discuss specific concerns with faculty or staff, please email the school ATTN: Krystin. ECB will contact you to set up a meeting. It is our hope that this policy will keep lines of communication open and create the best possible learning environment for the students. Parent/Teacher Conferences are available if and when the need arises.

HOW CAN I VOLUNTEER?

Volunteers are an essential part of our performances and school community!

We invite and encourage families to assist us in areas, such as: chaperoning, event planning, sewing, poster distribution, labeling, mailings, backstage work, etc.

We also ask that you help promote ECB performances and sell tickets. Ticket sales and tuition are the two main sources of ECB income. Since tuition alone does not cover the cost of ECB's school expenses, ECB depends on ticket sales and fundraisers to help fill that gap. ECB needs and appreciates your support.

(Scholarship students and parents must be available as needed.)

WILL I BE ABLE TO WATCH MY CHILD TAKE CLASS?

The study of ballet requires a great deal of hard work and focus. We know parents/families are eager to see their child's progress, therefore we schedule Parent Class Observation at the end of the 1st term (and possibly the end of 2nd term.) The Spring Showcase will be another opportunity to observe your child's growth.

ARE PRIVATE LESSONS AVAILABLE?

Typically, Private Lessons are only made available to those recovering from an injury. Please contact the office to discuss. COST: fee will be assessed at the discretion of the teacher/coach.

CAN A TEACHER HELP MY DANCERS WITH A VIDEO AUDITION FOR A SUMMER PROGRAM OR COLLEGE APPLICATION?

COST: video session: $80.00/hour
Checks made payable to: ECB
Please contact the office to schedule.

INCLEMENT WEATHER/CLOSINGS & CANCELLATIONS?

In the event of class cancellation due to hazardous weather conditions, an announcement will be sent as a school wide email. Please check your email before leaving the house if the weather is questionable! NO credit will be given for school closings due to inclement weather as these events are beyond our control. A make-up class can be taken in another pre-existing class. Final cancellation decisions will be made by 2 pm.

If a class is canceled one day due to an unforeseen circumstance, we will inform you as to when the class can be made up.

We will NOT give credit to anyone who doesn't come to their regularly scheduled class due to a family conflict, other activity, school commitment or illness.

WILL MY CHILD PERFORM?

BALLET SPOOKTACULAR: Company members in Level 5/6/7/8 will have the opportunity to perform in Ballet Spooktacular each October at The Kate in Old Saybrook.

NUTCRACKER: Dancers in Level 1-8 may audition to participate in The Nutcracker to be presented each December at The Garde Arts Center in New London. Please see the school calendar for audition dates and mandatory meeting days/times.

MID SPRING SHOW: New in 2026! Dancers in select levels will have to opportunity to opt in to a special Story Ballet at The Kate in March!

SPRING SHOWCASE: Every year ECB presents a Showcase that involves the entire school. Our very youngest dancers take their place on stage along with our most accomplished students, experiencing the thrill of the lights, music and a live audience! Palmer Auditorium at Conn College is our Spring Showcase homebase!

EMAIL COMMUNICATION

ALL ECB communication is sent out via email. PLEASE BE SURE WE HAVE A WORKING EMAIL ADDRESS FOR YOU THROUGH YOUR JACKRABBIT PORTAL.

HELPFUL TIPS!

- Mark all of your dancers' shoes with their name using a permanent marker
- Tie your child's ballet slipper drawstring in 2 to 3 knots and cut the remainder off. Do not tie them in a bow.
- Young dancers may want to pack an extra set of dance clothes or play clothes in their bags in case of an accident.
- Make a kit of extra hair supplies for your child's bag! (Elastics, hair pins, bobby pins, hair nets, brush/comb, hairnet and hairspray)
- Dancers will have a better class experience if they are dressed properly and are on time for class. Older dancers should arrive early to stretch and get their bodies prepared to take class.
- Pointe shoes kit suggestions: Needle/thread, safety pins, toe tape, second skin, spacers, small scissors, jet glue, nail clippers, toe pads, rosin spray