



Menagerie Dance Program

at Wauconda Park District

*Ballet • Pointe • Jazz • Tap • Modern
Lyrical • Musical Theatre • Hip Hop*

A Guide for Students and Parents

As a condition of enrollment at Menagerie Dance students and their parents or guardians agree to abide by all the policies set forth by its director, faculty, and staff. The Menagerie Dance Program reserves the right to terminate any student's enrollment at any time for misconduct or inappropriate actions by either the student or his or her parent(s).

Welcome to The Menagerie Dance Program!

This handbook will serve as your guide to our program and its philosophy of dance education.

We take our roles as mentors and teachers in your child's life very seriously. It is our objective to inspire a passion for the art of dance in every child who passes through our doors. In the process, we strive to set the right example and help your child (and you) create memories that will last a lifetime.

Philosophy

The Menagerie Dance Program is committed to providing high-quality dance classes to enhance the overall development of the child. We provide a safe and child-centered environment to encourage our students to explore dance with qualified, nurturing teachers.

We believe that dance training encourages young people to develop a positive self-image as they increase awareness of their physical being. Along with improving coordination skills and developing muscular awareness, dance classes give children the freedom to express themselves through movement.

The highest educational standards are expected from all Menagerie Dance Program faculty members. They are lifelong learners who continue to educate themselves through certification programs, teacher-training schools, conferences, and other learning opportunities.

ABOUT THIS HANDBOOK

Now in our 17th year, the Menagerie Dance Program is quickly becoming a leader in Dance Education. We believe that our success comes as a result of providing solid training and quality service, as well as our underlying belief in the strength of our organization. We have created this handbook to offer our students and their parents a clear understanding of their commitments and responsibility to the school.

The Menagerie Dance Program

600 N. Main Street, Wauconda, IL 60084

Phone: 847-526-3610

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www.waucondaparks.com/programs/menagerie-dance/

www.facebook.com/menagerie.danceprogram

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Location of Dress Rehearsal and Recital

555 N. Main Street

Wauconda, IL 60084

For inclement weather cancellations please visit:

www.emergencyclosingcenter.com

You will receive an email from the Dance Coordinator and/or your child's teacher if we will need to cancel class due to inclement weather. In most cases, classes will be canceled if District 118 is closed for inclement weather.

FOR OUR STUDENTS

The first step to becoming a successful dancer is making a solid commitment to your classes. Strong technique is a key ingredient and class is where you develop that technique. Come to each class prepared to learn and without personal distractions. Class time is your chance to focus on yourself, so try to leave your concerns or worries at the studio door. True progress is made when you look at each class as an opportunity to become better at what you love to do. Dance full-out, stretch a little further, become more aware of your technique, and make the most of every class.

Respect for the teachers is essential. Listen to each correction given, whether it's directed at you or another dancer. A correction is an honor; it shows you how much a teacher cares about your progress as a dancer. Always say thank you when a teacher or choreographer offers you constructive criticism. Nothing can stop those students who apply themselves in every class and appreciate their teachers' knowledge and experience.

FOR THE PARENTS: *"WE'RE IN THIS TOGETHER"*

We believe that children's success depends on the support of their parents or guardians. Because your commitment to the process makes an enormous difference, we encourage you to be a part of your child's dance education.

Our programs rely on a positive atmosphere and educational experience for our faculty and students and their parents. Cooperation between all parents is expected. Showing respect—for other parents, the students, and the faculty—makes an important impression on the children. You are a role model for your child about how to interact with others in a professional setting.

Your child's presence at all classes is imperative. The spirit of teamwork and the lesson of dedication are a big part of our school's educational process.

Parents and teachers may look at a child's learning from different perspectives. However, we believe they share a common goal: to ensure that every child receives the best possible training, both physically and mentally. Mutual respect among our faculty and our students' parents provides the children with the ultimate care and education.

Special Information for Parents of Preschool Students

Our purpose is to provide the highest-quality dance education in a secure, nurturing, and stimulating environment. The Menagerie Dance Program serves the physical, emotional, and intellectual needs of the preschool dancers. We meet these goals with our age-appropriate curriculum and ongoing communication with parents.

The first few weeks of classes serve as an introductory phase to help students become comfortable with the overall dance experience, the classroom, their teacher, and their classmates.

Right from the beginning we focus on your child's coordination, listening skills, musical awareness, and developing imagination. We accomplish this through age-appropriate music and song, simple stretching exercises, ballet basics, and games in an environment of creativity.

Preschool dance is about helping children learn to tap into their imaginations and express themselves creatively, not necessarily about learning steps (although they do get introduced to some basic steps). So, don't be disappointed if your child doesn't pirouette around the house or look like a budding ballerina right away.

Separation from the Parent

The process of separating from the parent as the child attends dance class is an important accomplishment of preschool children. As children mature, they begin to identify themselves as independent personalities. In separating from you, the parent, your child is learning

- to develop an interest in the activities of the dance class;
- to feel comfortable with other children in the class;
- to understand that his/her parent will come back and pick him/her up;
- to understand that all parents leave their children and come back for them.

It is important to know that at times young children will explore the limits of attending dance class and say they don't want to go. This period may occur anytime, but it is usually short-lived. Here are some suggestions that might help you handle the situation:

- Emphasize what the child is doing at the dance class rather than what you do while he/she is in class.
- Before you leave, see that the child is involved in an activity or is in the hands of a teacher.
- Avoid prolonged good-byes.
- Ask the teacher for help in separation. We expect the crying (and usually the tears are for the parent's benefit).

It May Not Be the Right Time

If your child cries or does not want to take class, don't panic. If we push children and create more stress than they are already experiencing, they may come to perceive dance class as a bad experience. That kind of negativity could make them apprehensive about dance for a long time, which isn't good for anyone involved. Never force your child into the classroom.

FOR ALL PARENTS AND STUDENTS

Understanding Dance Education

As a parent, you play an important role in supporting your student. Encourage your child to be the best that he or she can be regardless of what others may achieve. Dance is an individual art form and children need to be allowed to achieve at a pace that's comfortable. No two students will progress at the same rate, even if they experience the exact same training. It's important to encourage children to focus on themselves, give their all, and be satisfied with their own accomplishments.

Not all children will develop into professional dancers. One of the primary goals of our faculty is to teach life lessons and skills that offer children the best chance for success. Dance education encompasses far more than technique and the steps your children learn. We believe the discipline of dance training gives young people a better understanding of commitment through learning, experiencing the spirit of teamwork, and discovering what they can accomplish through hard work. Our goal is to educate the minds, bodies, and souls of our students, teaching them the skills needed for a successful life, whether or not they stay involved in dance.

Class Placement

The dance faculty meets regularly to discuss the students' progress and/or placement. It is our policy to offer appropriate opportunities to every child.

Placement decisions are derived from many years of teaching experience. Often a child is placed in a particular group or class where he or she will feel confident, to promote the development of self-esteem. Some students who are placed in a higher level become discouraged, only to lose their passion for dance. Others respond to the challenge of being in a class with students who are more proficient by pushing themselves to work harder. Placement is highly individual and the factors that go into the decision are complex.

Classroom Observation

Occasionally, instructors may invite parents in at the end of class to view exceptional accomplishments on a given day. You are welcome to take video and pictures during these impromptu demonstrations!

We kindly ask that you silence your cell phones while in the lobby as well as the studio, as a courtesy to the office staff and dancers. Please supervise siblings and keep the walkways clear of coats, shoes, toys etc. to allow all patrons to access their activities safely. When in the classroom, show your dancer support by giving them your full attention and encouragement. Show the dancers what it means to be a good audience member, as you set the best example.

Medical Information

Parents must notify the coordinator/and or teachers regarding children who use an inhaler or who may require medications during their time at The Menagerie Dance Program. It is also important to inform the director and/or teachers about your child's existing medical conditions or learning

disabilities at the time of registration and throughout the school year. Our teachers are trained professionals who are excited to work with all children and personalities, and the more we know about your child, the better the dance experience will be for all involved. All information about our students is confidential.

Dos and Don'ts

Some parents may compare their child's progress or class placement to another child's. Watch for this behavior in your children as well and encourage them to focus instead on their own accomplishments.

Looking to other students for inspiration is good; however, making negative comparisons distracts children from focusing on becoming stronger dancers. In addition, speaking negatively about your child's teachers, fellow students, or other parents in front of your child—or other students—could result in problems far beyond your original concerns. Often children will imitate a parent's behavior with other adults or authority figures.

Children learn important lessons from their teachers and parents, acquiring behavior patterns through their example. Our school's faculty takes that responsibility seriously. It's our philosophy to encourage our students to feel, think, and act respectfully toward their peers, the adults in their lives, and themselves.

If you have questions or concerns about your child's dance education (such as progress or class placement), please discuss them with your child's teacher or the coordinator.

STAYING INFORMED

We work hard to make the dance experience organized and fun. Keeping you informed is one of our primary goals. Please read all newsletters and other school information. Important updates are emailed to the Head of Household or parent you designate at the time of registration. Please add the Coordinator's email address to your email contacts so as not to miss any important emails. The same information will be posted on the Wauconda Park District website and Menagerie Dance Program Facebook page.

If you have any questions regarding the information distributed, we encourage you to contact the office at 847-526.3610.

Feel free to email questions to the Dance Coordinator at cholmes@waucondaparks.com.

Facebook Page: <https://www.facebook.com/MenagerieDanceWPD/>

Follow the Menagerie Dance page on Facebook to receive updates on school events.

Dress Code Requirements

The Menagerie Dance Program maintains a dress code to encourage concentration and a sense of inclusiveness (variations in attire can be distracting and contribute to feelings of inequality). Uniformity in dancewear allows the teachers to assess how well the students are implementing the technique being taught, problems with alignment, and other important aspects of dance training.

- Students should carry their dancewear, shoes, and other belongings in a dance bag. Please print your child's name on the bag as well as on all its contents.
- Smart watches, jewelry, and safety pins should not be worn to class.
- Dance shoes should never be worn outside.
- Students with long hair should wear their hair tightly secured and styled away from the face.
- Ballet I/II and above should wear their hair in a bun.

Class	Girls	Boys
Preschool	Any solid colored leotard, pink tights. Shoes for appropriate dance style.	Solid colored t-shirt (not baggy), with black jazz pants, shorts or sweatpants. Shoes for appropriate dance style.
Ballet	Any solid colored leotard, pink tights and pink leather or canvas Ballet Shoes.	Solid colored t-shirt (not baggy), with black jazz pants, shorts or sweatpants. Black ballet shoes.
Jazz	Solid colored tank or leotard with black leggings or shorts. Black Jazz Shoes.	Solid colored t-shirt (not baggy), with black athletic pants, shorts or sweatpants. Black jazz shoes.
Tap	Solid colored tank or leotard with black leggings or shorts. Black Tap Shoes	Solid colored t-shirt (not baggy), with black athletic pants, shorts or sweatpants. Black tap shoes.
Modern/Contemporary Lyrical	Solid colored tank or leotard with black leggings or shorts. No Shoes.	Solid colored t-shirt (not baggy), with black athletic pants, shorts or sweatpants. No shoes.
Hip-hop	Comfortable clothes (not jeans) and clean sneakers.	Comfortable clothes (not jeans) and clean sneakers.

Fees and Expense Policy

Recital session students have the option of paying tuition in installments.

We offer individual student discounts to those students taking multiple classes. A 10% discount will be given on every additional class, per student. The Multiple class discount will be applied to the instruction portion of the class fees. We do not currently offer a sibling discount.

Your tuition for Recital session includes 30-weeks of instruction, simple costume, prop, or accessory for the Winter Showcase, Spring Recital costume and tights (if applicable), a recital t-shirt and a digital download of Spring Recital performances.

You are responsible for payment for the entire year. If you are unable to complete the year, you can request a credit to your account. Credit will be given for the remaining classes only. If a costume has already been ordered for your child, the cost of the costume will also be deducted from your credit.

Additional Fees

Tuition does not include dancewear, shoes, recital tickets or recital pictures.

Discipline Policy

In order to maintain a happy, healthy, professional environment, students are taught the importance of being a part of the group. We encourage students to have respect for other students, the teachers and staff, and studio property, and we foster the development of good habits and compliance with rules of conduct.

Our staff and faculty are trained to use constructive techniques of discipline to maintain class control and handle individual misbehavior.

- Children who exhibit unacceptable behavior or attitudes are directed to a positive alternative approach or behavior.
- If a child strikes another child, the two are respectfully separated and each is asked to explain what happened. They are then asked to help solve the problem, talk to each other, and reconcile with one another.
- Children who are disruptive will be respectfully asked to stop the behavior. If the behavior is repeated, they will be reminded of it and told how it affects others. If the disruption continues, the children involved will be asked to sit down for a short period of time (usually three to five minutes) before rejoining the class.
- If a child's misbehavior continues to disrupt the class, the parent or guardian will be called to pick up the child.

Termination of Enrollment

In certain circumstances, when it is in the best interest of one or more students, it may be necessary for the Program Coordinator or Director of Recreation to terminate a student's enrollment. Every effort will be made to correct a problematic situation before terminating enrollment. Reasons for termination of enrollment include the following:

- Disruptive or dangerous behavior by students or their parents
- Abuse of other children, staff, or property

Arrival and Departure

We encourage students to arrive 10 minutes before class starts.

For their safety, all students should be picked up immediately after class. Dancers will not be released to parents waiting in the circle drive. If we do not see a parent or familiar carpool, the child will remain with the instructor until they arrive. **Elementary School Students in 5th grade and below must be accompanied to and from the building by a parent or guardian.**

Attendance

All students are expected to attend their regularly scheduled classes. Each class offers a step forward in the educational process. A missed class could leave a child one step behind the other students. Frequent absences may slow down a dancer's progress and lead to uncertainty with recital choreography for both the absent dancer and all of the dancers in that class. From January through May, students are allotted 4 absences. **After the 4th absence, parents will be notified and the student's participation in the recital will be at the discretion of the instructor.**

Tardiness

Dance is a physical activity that requires the body to be warmed up in order to execute movement safely. Late students miss the proper warm-up and/or barre and therefore may sustain injury. Students who arrive more than 10 minutes late may be asked to observe class for reasons of personal safety.

Lost and Found

Please mark all dancewear, shoes, and personal items with your child's name. We will make every effort to locate and return lost items; however, we cannot be responsible for any items that your child brings to class.

Illness

Colds, flu, and other contagious diseases occur frequently and spread easily among children. To help protect your own child's health and to minimize the possibility of contagion, please keep your child at home if you observe any of the following symptoms:

- Congestion, runny nose, nasal discharge that is green or yellow
- Complaints of ear pain
- Cough

- Sore Throat
- Eyes that are pink, burning, itching, or producing discharge
- Diarrhea, nausea, or vomiting
- Fever or chills
- Fatigue, muscle or body aches.

If these symptoms or other conditions deemed contagious are observed in your child during a class, you will be called to pick up your child immediately.

When your child has a fever, please keep him/her at home until the temperature returns to normal. If there are any lingering signs of illness, such as glassy or watery eyes, listlessness, and drowsiness, please keep your child at home. This will help to ensure that the illness has passed and that your child will be well enough to resume class activities the following week.

Student and Parent Use of Social Media

Use of Facebook, Instagram, LinkedIn, blogging, and other online social-media vehicles is commonplace. This policy is intended to provide Menagerie Dance students and parents with guidelines to eliminate any confusion concerning the use of social media.

- You DO NOT have permission to reveal any information that compromises The Menagerie Dance Program. By that we mean you are forbidden to share personal information about the coordinator, faculty, other students or their families, or anything that is proprietary and/or confidential to them or The Menagerie Dance Program.
- Students and parents should neither claim nor imply that they are speaking on behalf of The Menagerie Dance Program.
- Never post anything that could compromise the self-esteem of students who attend The Menagerie Dance Program.
- Respect the law, including those laws governing defamation, discrimination, harassment, and copyright and fair use. Ensure that your social networking conduct is consistent with all of the policies contained in this handbook.

Spring Recital

Dress Rehearsal****

Friday, May 7, 2027

Wauconda High School

Recital

Saturday, May 8, 2028

Wauconda High School

All recital session students participate in our annual recital to be held at Wauconda High School.

Times for Dress Rehearsal and Recital will be released with the Recital Handbook in March.

******Dress Rehearsal is an important part of the students' preparation to perform in the recital.**

Please note that all students are expected to participate in the dress rehearsal in order to perform in the recital. It allows the students to become more familiar with their places onstage as well as the brightness of the lights and the volume of the music they will experience during the actual performance. They also get the opportunity to practice their stage makeup and check that all of the elements of their costume are secure and comfortable while they perform. If there are extenuating circumstances, please contact the Coordinator.

The recital offers our students a professionally directed performance that allows them to present to their families and friends the results of a year's hard work, dedication, and progress.

A big part of dance training includes learning through performance. Although performance opportunities can help prepare some students for a possible career in dance, they also contribute to children's success in non-dance activities. The experience helps build self-esteem and confidence, which can result in better in-school presentations, improved social skills, and strong college and job interview skills. The rehearsal process is a tremendous learning experience as well. It helps the children develop retention skills, and by working with their classmates on a group performance, they learn the positive aspects of working as a team to create the best result.

Recital Handbook

In March of each year we distribute a Recital Handbook (via email to the Head of Household) with all the information parents and students need to know to make the recital experience enjoyable for all.

Costumes

We spend many hours determining the correct costumes for each class. They are always age appropriate and of the highest quality possible. Costumes include all accessories (hats, gloves, tights, etc.), but do not include shoes.

To ensure that costumes are delivered in time for studio photographs and organized distribution to our students, costume orders are placed during the December holiday break. Costume manufacturers do not accept cancellations or offer refunds; therefore, the school does not refund for costumes ordered.

Recital Tickets

Ticket information, including pricing and how to purchase, will be included in the Recital Handbook in March. Initially, a six-ticket limit will be in place to ensure every dancer is able to have family members in the audience. After all families have had an opportunity to purchase their initial tickets, any remaining tickets will be sold on a first-come, first-served basis. Please be on the lookout for more information regarding recital tickets in the Recital Handbook in March.

Recital Photos

Class photos will be taken at The Wauconda Park District. Dates and times are subject to change. Please confirm your child's time on the updated schedule to be distributed with your Recital Handbook. We encourage all students to be present for their class picture. After the group photo shoot, students may choose to have solo portraits taken. There is no obligation to purchase photos, however we encourage all students to be present for the class photo.

Menagerie Dance Program
Recital Session Calendar
2026-2027

Recital Session:

Tuesday, September 8, 2026 - Saturday, May 8, 2027

All dance classes will run weekly at their regularly scheduled times with the exception of the No Class Dates listed below. In the event of a cancellation due to inclement weather or instructor illness, a makeup class will be scheduled. If a makeup class cannot be scheduled, a credit will be placed on your account. Notifications of cancellation will be sent primarily via email and when necessary, phone calls will be made in cases of short notice as well.

No Class Dates:

Tuesday, October 27 - Thursday, October 29

Thanksgiving Break: November 23-29

Winter Break: December 21-January 3

Spring Break: March 22-28

Performance Dates:

Winter Showcase: Sunday, December 6th

This showcase is usually split into two smaller groupings of classes due to the limited amount of seating in the Community Center Gym. Each performance is typically 45 minutes or less and every attempt is made to keep siblings in separate classes in the same performance whenever possible.

Dress Rehearsal: Friday, May 7

Dancers will rehearse between 4pm-8pm. Specific rehearsal times will be announced via email as well as in the Recital Information Letter in March. Once they are done rehearsing their dance(s), dancers do not need to stay for the rest of the rehearsal.

Spring Recital: Saturday, May 8

All dancers will perform in the same show unless otherwise announced. If we need to split into two groupings for the Recital, every effort will be made to keep siblings who are in separate classes in the same performance whenever possible.