

*A Dance Program from Front and Centre Productions, Inc.*

Welcome to ILLUSIONS Dance Studio! This Handbook has been developed to answer many of the Frequently Asked Questions about the studio. Please feel free to contact us at any time with your questions.

**STUDIO ADDRESS:**

105 Elizabeth Street

Suite 100

Osceola Mills, PA 16666

(814) 343-1812

ILLUSIONS@frontandcentre.org

[www.frontandcentre.org](http://www.frontandcentre.org)

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**STUDIO PHILOSOPHY**

ILLUSIONS Dance Studio offers high quality instruction in all areas of dance. We employ only the finest instructors, provide a nice, clean facility and workable class sizes so that students receive personal instruction at a reasonable cost.

At ILLUSIONS Dance Studio, our classes are designed to stimulate the enjoyment of dance while having an important foundation for further training. As the student advances, the variety and intensity of the class work increases. Many of our students have continued to participate in dance after their time with ILLUSIONS for the exercise and pure enjoyment of the art form. We offer classes for beginning through advanced students, ages three through adult.

**MISSION STATEMENT**

ILLUSIONS Dance Studio is dedicated to teaching correct dance technique, theory, and terminology for beginning through advanced students of all ages. We do not believe in over inflated prices for a lot of show. We believe in teaching the basics of the art form to provide a solid foundation both mentally and physically. This foundation enables the student to understand and perform dance at any level. It allows the student to appreciate the true beauty of the art form.

The teaching staff at ILLUSIONS is comprised of vibrant and energetic teachers who are well trained in the field of dance. They understand what it takes to be a good dancer and make it a priority to pass that knowledge on to their students.

Our students are our first priority. It is our goal that they receive a positive and excellent education in dance.

**TEACHING STAFF**

The teaching staff at ILLUSIONS is dedicated to providing a welcoming, safe space for learning. All of our instructors have an extensive history of dance instruction and performance. We do not have high school students or inexperienced teachers to teach classes. Teachers monitor and discuss students’ progress across each of the disciplines to make sure that each student is performing to the best of his or her ability. Our staff strives to give each student the individual attention and instruction he or she needs to reach their potential.

Each of our teachers brings a unique perspective, personality, and skill set to the classroom environment. Students benefit from these differing approaches and environments as they mirror the professional environment dancers will encounter throughout their dance career.

SAM POTTER – Jazz, Acro, Broadway, Contemporary

ERICA HANES – Ballet, Tap, Jazz, Contemporary

**CLASS STRUCTURE**

All of our classes have a consistent structure, whether it is ballet, tap, jazz, acro, contemporary, Broadway, or Pointe. Stretches and warm-ups are crucial to the success of each class. They provide a foundation of specific dance technique the student is learning. Similar in learning to spell, a student first needs to know the alphabet. Each step used in the warm-up is used later in the class as part of the center work or part of the work across the floor. For example, plies (bending of the knee) are done at the beginning of each ballet class. Plies are then used each time the dancers jump and as preparation for many types of turns. If plies are done incorrectly, they dancer risks injury. We, therefore, use the beginning of each class to establish correct placement and execution of plies.

After stretching and warm-ups, student will learn dance combinations that could then be used for the final routine performed in the dance recital. In addition, there are numerous activities and exercises the instructors will use to keep the dancers engaged and excited, while also teaching essential skills necessary for proper dance performance.

**CLASS DESCRIPTIONS**

At ILLUSIONS Dance Studio, we offer 6 types of dance: ballet, tap, jazz, acro, contemporary, and Broadway. All our classes are divided into different levels which are based on age and student ability. We believe that it is important for a student to be placed appropriately so they may get the most out of a class. Placement is done by the instructors based on individual evaluation.

**Ballet** is the basis for all dance forms. It teaches the strong foundation and terminology that is needed by all dancers. Ballet is a system of precise, formalized movements set to music and used to tell a story. Dancers will develop proper posture, strength, and grace while learning basic ballet positions, and skills.

**Tap** is a form of dance that deals with rhythms of the feet. Tap is characterized by using the sounds of tap shoes striking the floor as a form of percussion. The sound is made by shoes that have a metal "tap" on the heel and toe.

**Jazz** is a more funky form of dance. The body is used in many different ways and is not as restricted as in ballet. Jazz is an umbrella term that can refer to several related dance styles. All of them are connected via common roots, namely tap, ballet, jazz music, and African-American rhythms and dance.

**Acro** is a style of dance that combines classical dance technique with precision acrobatic elements. It is defined by its athletic character, its unique choreography, which seamlessly blends dance and acrobatics, and its use of acrobatics in a dance context. Dancers will learn proper execution and incorporation of these eye-catching dance tricks through progressive skill building and spotted repetition. This class emphasizes strength and flexibility.

**Contemporary** is a style of dance that combines classical dance technique with precision acrobatic elements. It is defined by its athletic character, its unique choreography, which seamlessly blends dance and acrobatics, and its use of acrobatics in a dance context. Contemporary dance portrays a person, place, or thing through expressive movements. Dancers will incorporate ballet, jazz, modern, and improvisational dance elements to create a beautifully unique dance experience each class. This class emphasizes emotional connection and performance.

**Broadway** is a much more presentational style of dance, and concerns itself with the aesthetics of the entire dancing body. Some foundational tap vocabulary includes: Time steps: a dancer keeps time, or the musical beat. Broadway is about bringing a performance to life! Dancers will experience all styles of movement by learning AND co-choreographing original dances inspired by musical theatre’s famous shows, songs, and characters. This class emphasizes energy and character development…and all that jazz.

**Pointe** technique is the part of classical ballet technique that concerns pointe work, in which a ballet dancer supports all body weight on the tips of fully extended feet within pointe shoes.

**DRESS CODE**

Our dress code was established to promote the students’ freedom of movement and the instructor’s observation of correct technique. Hair should be worn off the face and neck, in a bun if possible. This enhances the dancer’s vision and enables the instructor to observe proper alignment of neck and shoulders.

**BALLET** - Comfortable and form-fitting clothes, not covering the ankles. Tights and leotard preferred. Pink ballet shoes required.

**TAP** - Comfortable and form-fitting clothes, not covering the ankles. Tights and leotard preferred. Flat, black tap shoes required.

**JAZZ** - Comfortable and form-fitting clothes, not covering the ankles. Black jazz shoes are required for class. Character shoes may be required for recital based on performance.

**ACRO** - Comfortable and form fitting clothes, not covering the ankles. Bare feet preferred.

**CONTEMPORARY** - Comfortable and form-fitting clothes, not covering the ankles. Bare feet or “foot undies” based on dancer’s preference.

**BROADWAY** - Comfortable and form-fitting clothes, not covering the ankles. Black jazz shoes are required for class. Character shoes may be required for recital based on performance.

**POINTE** – Tights and leotard required. Pointe shoes may only be worn upon approval by instructor.

All students need to wear proper dance attire to class. At no time may students wear jeans to class. Proper Dance Attire and Shoes are MANDATORY for safety and the overall well-being of the student’s dance education.   An instructor reserves the right to dismiss a student from class after one warning.   Please respect our policy, as it is to benefit the students and allow them to become the dancer they desire to be. We do not recommend that you share dance shoes, it is not good for sanitary reasons and does not ensure proper fit of dance shoes.

Recital Attire based on level as follows:

**PETITE** – Black, spaghetti strap leotard. Ballet/Tap Only – Pink Tights

**YOUTH** – Black, spaghetti strap leotard. Ballet/Tap Only – Pink Tights

**JUNIOR** – Nude/Skin Tone, spaghetti strap leotard. Ballet/Tap Only – Pink Tights

**SENIOR** – Nude/Skin Tone, spaghetti strap leotard or sports bra and briefs. Ballet/Tap/Jazz Only – Nude/Skin Tone Tights

**CLASS PLACEMENT**

Typically, our classes are divided into levels based on age. There are individual situations that may warrant movement up a level based on ability and performance. These are determined by the instructor and dancer’s family based on what is in the best interest of the dancer. We believe that it is important for a student to be placed appropriately so that he/she can get the most out of the class. Our instructors take a personal interest in each dancer. Initial evaluation involves determining a student’s present ability in light of previous dance experience, individual skill, and muscle development. New students should register for a class according to the age guidelines, and if a change is needed, this will be discussed with the dancer and his/her family.

ILLUSIONS Dance Levels are as follows:

**PETITE** – Pre-School through Kindergarten

**YOUTH** – Grades 1 through 3

**JUNIOR** – Grades 4 through 6

**SENIOR** – Grades 7 through 12

**STUDIO POLICIES**

Code of Conduct

* Dancers are expected to be at class on time and prepared in proper dance attire (see dance attire requirements). Instructors reserve the right to dismiss any dancer from class whose attitudes are unsatisfactory. ILLUSIONS Dance Studio promotes that ALL dancers treat each other with respect, support, and encouragement.

Semesters

* ILLUSIONS Dance Studio maintains 2 separate semesters:
	+ FALL (September – December)
	+ WINTER-SPRING (January – May)
* There is a recital held at the conclusion of each semester

Tuition

* Monthly tuition payment is due the first week of the month. A late fee of $10 will be assessed if tuition is not received on time.
* ILLUSIONS Dance Studio will handle refunds on a case by case basis.
* Front and Centre Productions, Inc. members received a reduced tuition rate. Annual individual Front and Centre Productions memberships are $10 and family memberships are $25.
* Tuition can be paid 3 ways:
	+ Via check or cash and can be placed into the wooden Drop-Box on the front desk at your convenience
	+ Via online system - https://app.jackrabbitclass.com/jr3.0/ParentPortal/Login?orgID=536158
	+ Via meeting with administrator to pay in person via credit card
* A 10% discount is available for any dancer(s) choosing to pay for the entire semester tuition all at once at the beginning rather than monthly payments.
* Tuition rates are as follows:

|  |
| --- |
| **ILLUSIONS****Dance Studio Registration** |
| **FAC Member Families** | **Non-Members** |
| 1st Class - $43/month2nd Class – ADD $38/month3rd Class – ADD $33/monthEach Additional Class - $28/month  | 1st Class - $58/month2nd Class – ADD $53/month3rd Class – ADD $48/monthEach Additional Class - $43/month |

* There will be a $35 service fee for all checks returned to us by your bank. If this occurs more than two times, tuition must be paid in cash. If there are any circumstances that arise that will not allow you to pay your tuition on time, please discuss with Stephen Switala prior to any delinquent fees. We can develop a plan for your situation, as we want all dancers to be successful. Please note that failure to pay tuition on time may result in termination of enrollment.
* Tuition fees cover the tuition ONLY for the class. Costume costs will be extra and handled within the first month of each semester.

Costumes

* ILLUSIONS Dance Studio understands that additional costs for costuming for recitals can often be a detriment to many families. ILLUSIONS will make every effort to keep costuming affordable for families. Participation in numerous classes will result in different costumes and can result in more expense than for students in just one class. Please direct your concerns regarding recital costumes to your instructor.
* It is our desire to keep the cost of each costume to $50 per costume. Again, if there are financial concerns, please contact Stephen Switala and each situation will be handled individually to ensure dancer participation and success.

Attendance/Participation/Tardiness

* Attendance is taken in each class for all dancers. This is imperative, as absences and tardiness can hold back an entire class, and the instructors cannot jeopardize its responsibilities to the rest of the class for just one student. If a student misses two classes in a month, the instructor will notify the parent if a paid make-up lesson is necessary for the student to catch up. If dancer absence becomes an on-going issue, a meeting will be scheduled to discuss appropriate options. Please make every effort to have your dancer at every class.
* If a student is unable to dance, but is feeling well enough to attend class, we expect them to participate by observing so that they will retain key elements of class. Students who feel ill, have a fever, or are exhibiting “contagious” cold symptoms should stay home and rest. Cases of prolonged absence due to illness or injury should be discussed with the teacher. When possible, please notify the instructor of the expected absence.
* All students are expected to arrive on time and in the appropriate attire. We understand that circumstances may delay you, sometimes. If you are more than 10 minutes late, you may be asked to sit and watch the class. Classes are designed to warm up muscles slowly and properly. Jumping into a class that has already started may cause injury. If you are tardy, please see the instructor, apologize for your late arrival, and ask him/her whether you can join the class or watch. Please respect your instructor’s decision in this matter; they are only looking out for the dancer’s best interest.

Lost Items

* Please label all belongings. A lost and found box will be located in the studio’s warm-up area. All valuables should be left at home or with the dancer’s family. The studio cannot be held responsible for lost items.

Recitals

* There will be Recitals scheduled at the conclusion of each semester. Dates and times for additional dress rehearsals will be announced closer to recital time. All students are expected to perform in all recitals. Recital location will also be announced closer to recital time.

Media Release

* Dancer participation at ILLUSIONS Dance Studio agrees to the following:
	+ We grant permission to ILLUSIONS Dance Studio and Front and Centre Productions, Inc/ to use images of my child(ren). Such use may include the display, distribution, transmission, or otherwise use of photographs, images, and/or video taken of my child(ren) for us in materials that include, but may not be limited to, printed materials such as brochures and newsletters, advertising, videos, and digital images such as those on Front and Centre Productions, Inc. website, Front and Centre Productions, Inc. or ILLUSIONS Facebooks pages, Instagram, or Twitter. By agreeing to this release, we understand that we are giving unrestricted permission for my child(ren)’s image to be used in print, video, and digital media. We agree that these images may be used without further notification, and that the images become to the sole property of Front and Centre Productions, Inc. and ILLUSIONS Dance Studio.

Studio Rules

* NO GUM CHEWING IN ANY CLASS.
* Hair must be secured up off of neck and face in all classes.
* No toys or jewelry in dance class.
* No one is allowed in class other than dancers and instructors.
* Parents and other family members must remain in the lobby area during all dance classes.
* Only dancers preparing for the next dance class should be in the warm-up area.
* Students should have water bottles handy for small drink breaks that will be needed and is necessary for dancers to stay hydrated throughout class.
* Please use restroom BEFORE class begins.
* Shoes and proper dance attire are REQUIRED.
* Dancers are to be picked up promptly following classes and at no time are allowed to leave the studio to go anywhere without their parent/guardian.
* If you have any other questions or concerns, please discuss them with Directors or Instructors when it does not interfere with class. We are always interested in improving our dance education programs and every suggestion will be given serious consideration.

Dancer Etiquette

* **ETIQUETTE FOR YOUNG DANCERS:**
	+ We feel it is important to pass along some etiquette guidelines for those new to the dance world. These principles are very important to the development of young dancers in regard to discipline and learning:
	+ Dancers should have hair pulled back and out of their face for every class.
	+ Dancers should have names on their dance bag and every pair of shoes.
	+ Dancers need to wear tights.
	+ Dancers need to use restrooms prior to dance class.
	+ Dancers should have appropriate shoes for the appropriate class. It is very important, even at a young age, that dancers have good ballet shoes and that they fit close to snug.
	+ Dancers should not wear dance shoes outside.
	+ Dancers should not wear street shoes for dance class.
	+ Parents should respect all Instructors’ rehearsal expectations with regard to watching dance classes.
* **ETIQUETTE FOR THE PRE-TEEN, TEEN, and ADULT DANCERS:**
	+ All students should adhere to the younger dancer etiquette but should also consider the following. Below are some tips by dance journalist, Treva Bedinghaus.  We thought this article provides exactly what every dancer dancing more than three hours a week should strive for.
		- Your dance bag comes in handy for toting around your dance shoes, but your dance bag should also prepare you for the unexpected. Make sure your dance bag is packed with items you might possibly need, including emergency health supplies, extra dance gear and clothing, personal beauty items, and quick snacks.
		- Emergency Health Supplies: As every dancer knows, unexpected things will happen. Whether it is a sudden headache before an audition or a bleeding blister, it pays to be prepared. Always carry a few extra health supplies you might need in case of an emergency. Throw a small emergency kit inside your dance bag with the following items: pain relief medication, band-aids, antibiotic ointment, toe tape, gauze, and a small manicure kit.
		- Extra Dance Gear and Clothing: Wearing the proper dance gear is extremely important to a dancer. Your dance bag should contain necessary gear and clothing you need for each style of dance that you participate in. Make sure and pack the following important items: various dance shoes, toe pads, legwarmers, shrugs or light sweaters, extra tights, extra leotard, and small sewing kit.
		- Personal Beauty Items: Every dancer wants to look (and smell) their best while dancing. Ballet dancers especially concern themselves with a tidy appearance, including tight hair buns and smooth clothing lines. Besides appearances, you've probably been in a dance studio with a dancer who seemed to have forgotten all about personal hygiene. Confidence is everything to a dancer, so give yourself an edge by packing the following items: hair ties, hair pins and bobby pins, hair nets, hair spray, deodorant, breathe mints, sweat towel, chap stick/lip gloss, nail clippers, and lightly-scented body spray.
		- Quick Snacks: Food and water are essential to dancers of all types. Running out of energy on the dance floor is easy to do during long classes or rehearsals. Make sure you keep your body going by grabbing a snack or drink whenever you need it. Here are a few healthy items to keep in your dance bag: bottled water, hydrating drinks, granola/energy bars, trail mix, bananas, pretzels.

**HOLIDAYS/INCLEMENT WEATHER**

ILLUSIONS Dance Studio will be closed on the following holidays:

* New Year’s Day
* Good Friday
* Easter
* Memorial Day
* Independence Day
* Labor Day
* Thanksgiving
* Christmas

The safety of our dancers, teacher, and parents is of utmost concern. If the weather is bad (snow, ice, or dangerously cold), we may cancel classes. Generally, we will follow the closure of the Philipsburg-Osceola Area School District. Sometimes, however, the weather and roads may clear in time for our afternoon and evening classes. Dancer families will be notified via BAND if classes are cancelled. If no notice is received, classes will occur as scheduled. An announcement will also be placed on our ILLUSIONS Dance Studio Facebook page.

BAND is a Communications App that ILLUSIONS will utilize for important announcements and disseminating information to all dancers and families. You can sign up for these announcements here:

<https://band.us/n/a4a812b4VdG54>

**DANCE SUPPLIES**

We encourage students to purchase necessary supplies from The Dance Shop in Altoona, PA. Please mention that you are purchasing items for ILLUSIONS Dance Studio dancers and they will know exactly what supplies are recommended by our instructors.

The Dance Shop

3614 6th Avenue

Altoona, PA 16602

(814) 941-1915

If you are ordering supplies online, please contact your dancer’s instructor to ensure the appropriate items are purchased.

**STAFF**

Stephen J. Switala, Jr. – Executive Director, Front and Centre Productions, Inc.

Sam Potter – Artistic Director, ILLUSIONS Dance Studio

Justine Washic – Assistant Director, Front and Centre Productions, Inc.

Stephen Torquato – Director of Education and Outreach, Front and Centre Productions, Inc.

Diane Switala – Treasurer, Front and Centre Productions, Inc.

Ethan Washic – Director of Building and Grounds, Front and Centre Productions, Inc.

Sam Potter – ILLUSIONS Teacher: Jazz/Acro, Jazz, Contemporary, Broadway

Erica Hanes – ILLUSIONS Teacher: Ballet, Tap, Pointe, Contemporary

**HANDBOOK ACKNOWLEDGEMENT**

Signing this ILLUSIONS Handbook Acknowledgement form confirms your agreement to the expectations outlined on the previous pages. The dancer and family must adhere to the stated rules and expectations throughout the entire session. Failure to follow these may result in dismissal from the program.

Student Name (please print): \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

Parent Name (please print): \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

Parent Signature: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_