



**DANCE
DEPARTMENT
HANDBOOK
2007-2008**

ABOUT THE DANCE DEPARTMENT

The Duke Ellington School of the Arts, Dance Department in Washington, D.C. has been in existence since 1974. Now in our 34th year, Ellington's Dance Department has had the opportunity to perform in venues both nationally and internationally. We are honored to have performed and participated in The International Association of Blacks in Dance Conferences in Canada, Washington, D.C., California and New York; the National High School Dance Festivals in Philadelphia, Pa., and Miami Florida.

The Dance Department has also traveled to Bermuda as guest for a two-month residency sponsored by a grant through D.C. Public Schools, "Learning Through Dance." The Ellington dancers also have extended their talents for community outreach programs and professional organizations. Collaborative endeavors include The Executive Leadership Conferences; "Ballet on Wheels" with the United Cerebral Palsy Foundation, Director Ted Bergeron; Ronald McDonald's House for Children, North Carolina; Kinston Children's Village Academy; St. Paul's Church for their "Mission Ministry"; and the Washington National Cathedral: Celebration of Dr. Martin Luther King, "Visions of the Future."

The Dance Department has welcomed the opportunities to experience master classes with renowned artist/choreographers, to name a few, Louis Johnson, Arthur Mitchell, Ronald K. Brown, Cleo Parker Robinson, Steve Rooks, Karen Brown and Pat Thomas. We also have been privileged to have residencies from professional dance companies: Alvin Ailey American Dance Theater, Dallas Black Dance Theater, Paul Taylor II and the Kirov. For the past four years, we have been honored to have as our guest/resident choreographer Christopher Huggins.

Duke Ellington's Dance Department closes its season every year with a Gala/Spring Dance Concert. This year (2007), the faculty of the dance department re-named the dance studios "The Mike Malone Studios." This honors the legacy of the Duke Ellington School of the Arts co-founder, Mr. Alvan Duncan Malone.

Melvin Deal – founding Executive Artistic Director of the African Heritage Dancers and Drummers, is a veteran artist of more than 40 years. Mr. Deal is an accomplished dancer, musician, choreographer, researcher and director.

WHERE ARE THEY NOW?

UNIVERSITIES, COLLEGES AND CONSERVATORIES

Adelphi University
CAL Arts
Clark Atlanta University
The College of William and Mary
Columbia University/Chicago
Fordham University
Goucher College
Hampton University
Hartford University
Harvard University
Howard University
Johnson C. Smith University
Maryland University
Marymount University
Morehouse College
New World School of the Arts
North Carolina School of the Arts
SUNY Purchase
University of the Arts / Philadelphia
University of Cincinnati
University of Michigan

PROFESSIONAL WORK

Alvin Ailey American Dance Theatre
Bejart Ballet Company
Cleo Parker Robinson Dance Company
Dallas Black Dance Theatre
Dance Theatre of Harlem
Dayton Contemporary Dance Company
Deeply Rooted Dance Theater
Gus Giordano Jazz Dance
Joffrey Ballet
Jubilation Dance Company
Lula Washington Dance Company
Martha Graham Dance Company
Philadanco Dance Company
Rod Rogers Dance Company
Washington Ballet

Graduates have also pursued careers on Broadway, national and international tours, film and video credits.

DRESS REQUIREMENTS

The dance department requires that all students be dressed properly for class, with appropriate clothes, shoes, and hairstyle. No outerwear will be allowed in class. (i.e., T-shirts, leg warmers, sweat/pajama pants or shorts)

GIRLS (ALL FEMALE)

- Black Leotard (Tank)
- Flesh-tone convertible tights
- Flesh-tone ballet shoes
- Pointe shoes (when required)

GIRLS LEVEL 3 & 4

- Ballet Skirt
- Black convertible tights – Modern

BOYS

- White tank T-shirt
- Black Convertible tights
- White leather ballet shoes
- White crew cut socks
- Black dance belt (supporter)
- Leather belt (waist)

HAIRSTYLE FOR GIRLS

All hair must be pulled back, away from face in a secure bun, covered with a thin hairnet.

HAIRSTYLE FOR BOYS

Neatly close-cropped hair

BOYS AND GIRLS

No braids, twist, extensions, locs, Bantu knots, cornrows, Mohawks, no sculpted hair, no ponytail, hair color, dyes, hennas, headwraps and/or scarves.

JEWELRY AND BODY ADORNMENTS

- No rings, nose rings, body adornments, watches, bracelets, necklaces, earrings, etc. (small stud only for girls)
- No nail or toe polish (nails must be no longer than fingertips)
- Visible tattoos must be covered with make-up daily).

ATTENDANCE

Ellington's class day begins at 8:35 a.m. Students are expected to be in their classes on time. When school is in session, students are expected to attend all daily classes, as attendance is taken each period.

All Ellington teachers are responsible for recording and reporting student attendance in all daily classes. Students and parents/caregivers are held accountable for reporting all absences within 48 hours of the student's return. All letters must be submitted to the Dean of Students or his designee for verification and approval.

Examples of Excuse Absences

- 1) Illness of the student (a doctor's certificate is required for a student absent for more than five days)
- 2) Death in the student's immediate family
- 3) Medical reasons such as a documented doctor's appointment (with doctor's certificate)
- 4) Necessity for a student to attend a judicial proceeding as a plaintiff, defender, witness or juror
- 5) Observance of religious holiday
- 6) Official school activities

Examples of Unexcused Absences and Tardiness

- 1) Babysitting
- 2) Shopping
- 3) Running Errands
- 4) Oversleeping
- 5) Cutting Classes
- 6) Job-hunting

Transportation / traffic excuses will be handled case by case by the Dean of Students. A student who arrives late to school must report directly to the Dean of Students or his designee before going to class. Entering class after it has begun is disruptive to the education of those students who arrive on time. Students who arrive late are required to sign and date a letter of agreement regarding attendance. Parents will receive copies to these notices signed by the chronic late arriving students at the end of the advisory periods. A late pass will be issued for students to be admitted into class.

Late arrivals may have limited access to their lockers upon arrival.

Chronic absences, truancy or tardiness are serious problems and undermine a student's ability to meet Ellington's expectations and standards, students with chronic unexcused attendance problems should expect that the school will take disciplinary action, which may include awarding a letter grade of "F."

PROPER CLASSROOM & STUDIO DECORUM FOR DANCERS

In the study of dance, students are not merely learning a technique. They are learning an art form, which possesses a rich history and a set of established traditions. It is most important that students are aware of these traditions, or protocol, since most instructors will automatically assume that they have an understanding of them. Failure to comply with the established policies is unacceptable and will be reflected in the students' grade.

The dance faculty expects all students to maintain proper behavior in all classes, and the following rules and guidelines will help you to meet our expectations:

- ♣ Be dressed for class in the regulation uniform with a well groomed appearance.
- ♣ Be on time for class. Do not hang out in the dressing room.
- ♣ All students must stand, and stop talking when the instructor enters studio. Unnecessary conversation breaks the concentration essential for proper study in class.
- ♣ If you are late, you must ask permission to take class. If the teacher does not give permission, you must sit on the floor, observe, and take notes.
- ♣ Do not enter or leave class without the instructor's permission. If you know ahead of time that you need to leave early, tell the teacher before class begins. In the instance that you feel you are unable to finish class due to illness or any other reason, tell the instructor before you leave.
- ♣ Never sit down in class unless you are finished. Muscles relax and cool down too quickly, causing the body to be susceptible to injuries. Do not use ballet barres as a resting place or a place miscellaneous clothing or jewelry.
- ♣ Develop the discipline and understanding of how to use your mental capabilities to work out individual problems. One of the most important facets of technique class is concentration. Pay attention to the total movement, focusing on sequence and quality.
- ♣ Corrections are essential to improvement in all dance classes. Acknowledge the correction with a positive response. Even if you are not the one receiving the correction, apply the information given. Often the situation will call for you to repeat the movement attempting to put the correction into effect. If you do not understand the correction, ask for further clarification.
- ♣ The student is in class to learn discipline as well as technique.
- ♣ It is an expected courtesy in the arts, that students applaud the teacher and accompanist at the end of the class.
- ♣ No food, gum, candy, juice, or soda will be allowed in the studio.
- ♣ Do not wear street shoes in the dance studio.

ALL cell phones and iPods should be secured in lockers before classes begin. Cell phones and iPods in the Dance Studio will be confiscated by dance faculty if they are visible.

First Offense: Returned at the end of the day.

Second Offense And Beyond: To be held until parent / guardian personally retrieves them.

When entering or exiting the studios, permission must be given by the instructor.

- ♣ Any studio or classroom problems should be dealt with in the following manner:
 - a. Conference with your Instructor
 - b. Conference with the Dance Chair
 - c. If necessary, a conference with Dance Chair, and Dean of Students / Principal

- ♣ Individual teachers may impose additional classroom rules or rules of decorum

NOTE: The Dance Department holds an “open door” policy. Please allow us to help you with any problems that could hinder your progress as a dance major. Parents are welcome to observe classes, but please make prior arrangements to do so; we ask that you check in at the Main Office. Please schedule appointments if you wish a conference with any teacher.

SELECTION PROCESS FOR CHOREOGRAPHIC WORKS

The selection process is decided upon by the choreographer or rehearsal director. The process for selection depends upon the complexity of the work, technical skill of the student, ability to perform as an ensemble member, attendance, participation and grades. Because a choreographer or rehearsal director has no control over illness, injury or other obstacles that prevent students from dancing in a performance, we strongly encourage students placed as understudies or in a secondary role to attend every rehearsal and to work diligently because understudies have been called upon to perform on numerous occasions.

NON-PARTICIPATION POLICY

All students will be responsible for ANY work missed.

Should a student NOT be able to fulfill his/her commitment to performing in a choreographic work due to any of the reasons listed, he/she will be replaced. Some of those reasons are:

- 1) Consistent Tardiness
- 2) Excessive Absences
- 3) Disruption of class, rehearsal and performance resulting in dismissal
- 4) Disciplinary action for any infraction of DCPS Policies
- 5) Failure to learn assigned roles
- 6) Failure to be productive with faculty, students, guest, choreographers and administration
- 7) Physical injuries

NON-PARTICIPATORY POLICY (LONG-TERM)

Once an injury has been verified by a physician and the student is deemed unable to participate for a minimum of two weeks and not more than one advisory, a letter grade of C or below will be administered for that period. If the injury is longer than one advisory, the students' tenure at Ellington must be revisited by the parent, principal, student, and dance faculty.

Although alternative work may be given, it does not constitute and will not equate for the physical requirements of the dance department.

PREGNANCY POLICY

If a student becomes pregnant, she will not be allowed to continue training with our program. Our curriculum is not designed to accommodate pregnant students, and our staff is not trained to teach them.

For the safety of the student, and to alleviate any liability of the faculty, school, or school system, pregnant students will **NOT** be permitted to participate in the rigorous daily dance classes. Pregnant students are asked to seek admittance into another department/school. This is necessary because during the time out of class, the student will not be able to gain the accurate number of course hours needed to pass the course and accumulate credit towards the high school diploma from Duke Ellington School of the Arts.

EXTRA-CURRICULAR PERFORMANCE AND STUDY POLICY

The curriculum of the dance department at Duke Ellington School of the Arts is accredited by the District of Columbia Public School System. The courses are comprehensive and progressive. Each member of our faculty comes to the department with professional dance background.

When students are enrolled in the dance department, they are expected to continue training only with our faculty, under our watchful instruction. Students gain official Carnegie units and letter grades toward their high school diploma when they are enrolled with us. Private dance schools have no official affiliation with this program, and Carnegie units and letter grades cannot be earned from outside study. Because of differences of technical demands and teaching styles, approval for any outside study and performances must be received from the dance faculty and/or Chairperson. Without approval from the Dance Department/Chairperson, any injuries, incorrect working habits resulting from outside studies and/or performances could affect letter grades, performance level, and tenure at Ellington.

While outside achievements are important to every student's life, it is equally important that a student in the Duke Ellington School of the arts Dance Department maintain a standard of excellence and allegiance within the department. This can only be achieved by the following:

- 1) Regular attendance to class and all rehearsals when required
- 2) Completion of the full school day within the dance department
- 3) Early dismissal and/or absences must be communicated and approved through the main office and dance department (Chairperson) as it relates to course content, exams and rehearsals.
- 4) Excessive absences and early dismissals will be reflected in the student's grade.

Students are required to take an intensive summer dance course at Duke Ellington School of the Arts or an outside venue with prior approval of the Dance Faculty/Chairperson.

We know that if students can successfully master their academic and artistic obligations with us, then there is not time for extra-curricular performances or training. Our concern is that students have the time and commitment to complete all of the requirements asked of them at the highest standard and that our students are well prepared to continue training past their Ellington years.

NOTE:

The Dance Faculty would like to impress the necessity of allegiance and serious dedication upon both the student and parents to make you aware of the responsibilities the student has to himself/herself, the director(s), fellow students, faculty and school.

GRADUATION REQUIREMENTS

ARTS GRADUATION REQUIREMENTS

The head of school shall, on the advice of the Dance Department Chair, certify for graduation those students who have earned the required credits to satisfy the graduation requirements.

Four-Year Course of Study Earns 13 Credits

Three-Year Course of Study Earns 9 Credits

First Year

Ballet Technique	1 Credit	Course Code P56
Modern Technique	1 Credit	Course Code P61
Dance Orientation	.5 Credit	Course Code P54
Potpourri	.5 Credit	Course Code P55/P55b
Ethnic I	.5 Credit	Course Code P66
Ethnic II	.5 Credit	Course Code P67
Total Credits /4		

Second Year

Ballet Technique II	1 Credit	Course Code P57
Introduction to Pointe Technique		
Modern Technique	1 Credit	Course Code P62
Dance Theory	.5 Credit	Course Code P59
Potpourri	.5 Credit	Course Code P55
Total Credits / 3		

Third Year

Ballet Technique / Pointe	1 Credit	Course Code P54
Modern Technique	1 Credit	Course Code P63
Dance Improvisation	.5 Credit	Course Code P97/P97a
Dance Composition	.5 Credit	Course Code P96/P96a
Total Credits / 3		

Fourth Year

Ballet Technique / Pointe	1 Credit	Course Code P93
Modern Technique	1 Credit	Course Code P64
Senior Project	1 Credit	Course Code P94/P94a
Total Credits / 3		

PROGRESS REPORT

Report cards are issued following the close of each advisory. Report cards are issued on one of the three ways:

- 1) Copies are made available to parents/guardians at the Parent Teacher Conference meetings following the closing of Advisories I, II, and III.
- 2) For those students whose parents/guardian do not attend the Parent Teacher Conference, copies of the report card will be delivered via student of mail.
- 3) Final report cards are mailed to the parent/guardian during the month of July.

Students in the Dance Department will be evaluated twice in each advisory, mid-point and at the end. While a student is required to maintain a “C” average academically to remain at Ellington a letter grade of “B” must be maintained in **ALL** dance courses. Failure to maintain an average grade of “B” in the dance courses may result in **NOT** being invited to return to Duke Ellington School of the Arts.

FEES AND OTHER EXPENSES

Duke Ellington students are required to pay a yearly activity fee of \$200, which directly benefits the Arts department in which they are enrolled. This fee should be paid at the time of registration, but can be paid in installments. Money orders and checks should be made to DESAP.

AUDITION

Dance auditions are held in the preceding school year at quarterly intervals. Area students are adjudicated from public, private, and parochial schools. Students who are currently in the 8th and 9th grades are considered for placement.

Students are assessed in four areas:

1) **Physical Adjudication**

At the beginning of the physical adjudication process, all forms must be completed and submitted to the dance adjudicators.

Inclusive and must have:

- ♣ Audition application
- ♣ Dance department health certificate (to be completed by physician)
- ♣ Photographs (1) 8x10 head shot
(1) 8x10 full body shot
- ♣ Last report card
- ♣ Three (3) letters of recommendation

2) **Academic Placement**

Based upon their audition performance, students will be invited to take the academic placement test. The test consists of four parts: **Math, Vocabulary, Reading Comprehension, and Essay**. The results of this test does not guarantee acceptance into the dance department.

3) **Family Interview**

The interview, with prospective students, and their parents/caregivers will review the student's first-year program (courses and required tutoring) and information about expectations of the school. Ellington's course of study is rigorous and this interview ascertains the level of seriousness of the student. This will also ascertain the student's level of commitment, as well as the parents', to the dance department, the dance department organization, and all dance department activities and functions, and the school as a whole.

4) **Final Call-Back**

The call-back is an elimination process that narrows the field of auditionees down to a select few. Acceptance into the Duke Ellington School of the Arts Dance Department will be determined during this final call-back. This call-back will be held in the spring. All decisions are final.

HAND BOOK RECEIPT

I have received the DANCE HANDBOOK and understand that I am responsible for Understanding the policies and procedures set forth in the handbook. I further understand that to insure that _____(child's name) is gaining the expected requirements and accomplishments from the course or study in the Dance Department, he/she is accepted on a **CONDITIONAL ACCEPTANCE** for the first year of entry into our Program.

Signature of Dance Student

Date

Signature of Parent/Guardian

Date

