



GAINESVILLE BALLET COMPANY & SCHOOL ELYSABETH MUSCAT HEGAB AND RAFIK HEGAB, DIRECTORS INTERNATIONAL PROFESSIONAL COMPANY & SCHOOL IN NORTHERN VA

Parent Handbook

Welcome!

You've made a great choice enrolling at Gainesville Ballet, an outstanding Dance School with a Professional Ballet Company right in the heart of Gainesville, Virginia.

Founded in 2013 by husband and wife Elysabeth Muscat Hegab and Rafik Hegab, Gainesville Ballet has grown exponentially in just a few short years. Gainesville Ballet School is a professional school with international staff and faculty who bring a wealth of experience, excellent organization, educational and artistic backgrounds, world class choreography, and a supportive, family atmosphere to the School.

The professional company, Virginia State Ballet, is leading the region in choice of repertoire with new world premieres each season, stellar dancers, and frequent use of international guest stars. The company was a Seefeldt Award finalist in 2016, and is supported in part by NOVEC, The Dominion Foundation, and Prince William County. This season's company includes 12 international professional dancers, and a full season at the Hylton Performing Arts Center as well as an international tour.

Gainesville Ballet is performance oriented, as Dance is a performance art. We are not competition oriented. Our goal is to provide excellent education, outstanding performance opportunities, customer satisfaction, and service to the community.

Please keep this Handbook on file for easy reference to FAQs that you may have. Answers to most questions can also be found on our website (<http://gainesvilleballetcompany.org>), or feel free to email info@gainesvilleballetcompany.org or call 703-753-5005. Email is usually the easiest and fastest way to correspond.

Please keep this handbook on hand for easy reference, and read through each section!

First steps:



- * Create your PARENT PORTAL account (instructions on next page).
- * LIKE our [Facebook Page](#).
- * Follow us on [Twitter](#).
- * Follow us on [Instagram](#).
- * Follow us on [LinkedIn](#).



Online Account Access

Parents and adult students can easily log onto the Jackrabbit customer portal to view and update their accounts, or even make payments. We may occasionally leave messages for families through the portal as well as through email. If you need to change your mailing or email address, update your credit card info, check your transaction history, etc., simply follow these directions:

- ⇒ Go to our website: <http://gainesvilleballetcompany.org>
- ⇒ Click on "Existing Customer Login"
- ⇒ Enter your email address (the one you used when registering) and your password.
- ⇒ If you haven't yet logged on, click on "Forgot password or need to get started."
- ⇒ You will be sent a password, then you can log on.

What to expect

Students will enjoy a year of dance instruction at our studios, with professional performances at the Hylton Performing Arts Center. We regularly send out emails with notices, information, updates, news, etc., so please read all emails carefully to be sure you don't miss out on important information! Online registration and billing runs smoothly, and parents have access to the online portal where they can update their info at the touch of a button.

There will be rehearsals outside of class time for The Nutcracker and the Spring Recital, on some Sundays. For the youngest children, there will only be 2 rehearsals per semester outside of class time. More advanced students will have more rehearsals as needed. This way, students are getting the maximum amount of class time that you have paid for.

Tuition will be billed automatically at the beginning of each month, September through June. Don't worry about how many weeks there are in each month, as it changes monthly due to holidays, etc. Tuition is based on a 34 week total, broken down into 10 equal payments.

If you have a question, please go directly to the source, which is the Managing Director. If you ask another parent in the waiting room, or even a teacher, you may not be getting the most up to date answer!

Curriculum

DANCE CLASSES:

The ballet classes follow the Russian Vaganova Syllabus. Advanced ballet students also take pas de deux (partnering) and variations classes: learning famous variations {solos} from standard classical ballet repertoire. Other dance forms are taught by experienced faculty with the most up to date training in modern, jazz, hip hop, and tap. We also offer many classes for young children (Pre Ballet, Ballet/Tap, Beginner Jazz, Jazz/Tap, Hip Hop.) Our expert teachers are trained to work with young children and often have assistants in class to be sure that there is a low student-teacher ratio. The young students grow up in the studio surrounded by students of various ages and abilities, up to the highest level of pre-professional and world famous guest stars, which gives them something to aspire to.

SPECIAL NEEDS CLASSES:

Gainesville Ballet also offers Special Needs Dance, which is an adaptive dance class taught by specially trained faculty for children with special needs such as Autism Spectrum or Down's Syndrome.

MUSIC LESSONS:

Lastly, Gainesville Ballet also offers outstanding music training! Private voice and piano lessons are taught by Managing Director Elysa Muscat Hegab, a former professional opera singer who has been on the faculty of the Peabody Institute of Johns Hopkins University for 15 years. Her students have won major vocal competitions, been accepted to top conservatories including Juilliard and Manhattan School of Music, and have gone on to professional careers in music. Private students perform in the end of year Recital at the Hylton Performing Arts Center, Merchant Hall, with their grand piano. Gainesville Ballet also partners with Little Hands Music, which gives group music classes to toddlers and young children on weekday mornings.

Inclement Weather

Gainesville Ballet does NOT follow Prince William County Schools school closings. In the event of inclement weather, we will make an announcement on our [Facebook page](#) and email the families. We will make decisions by 2:30 pm on weekdays and 8:00 am on Saturdays. Occasionally the weather forecast is wrong and we may need to close earlier than expected in the evening. In this case we will email the families and the students can call parents on their cells.

Tuition Policies

Tuition Policies can be found on our website at:

<http://gainesvilleballetcompany.org/policies/>

The most FAQ is “Why do I have to pay full tuition for June when there’s only 2 weeks of classes?”

Answer: Tuition is based on a 36 week school year, divided into 10 equal payments. The number of weeks in any month is irrelevant. Some months have 5 weeks, some have 4, some have 3, and some have 2. Rather than re-calculating separate amounts for each month, the year is divided into 10 equal installments of a year total based on 36 weeks.

Class Attire

Class attire for each level can be found online [here](#). You will also see our special Teacher Code for www.discountdance.com, where you can shop for class attire and receive a discount when you use our code.

Make up classes

Please try to attend as many of your scheduled classes as possible to keep up with the rest of the class. If we offer the same class on an alternate day of the week, you are welcome to take a make-up class at your convenience. Make-ups can not be carried over into different sessions or school years, and there is no refund or prorated tuition offered if a student misses a class.

Performances

One of the highlights of studying at Gainesville Ballet is the opportunity to participate in our performances at the Hylton Performing Arts Center. Students can participate in the annual Nutcracker in November, and the Spring Recital in June. Junior Company dancers can also dance in Gainesville Ballet Company professional productions, or at festivals such as Arts Alive. World famous guest stars are always invited to perform (principal dancers from American Ballet Theatre or New York City Ballet.) With these dancers, along with our own excellent professional company dancers, students receive a thrilling, unique professional experience.

The Nutcracker is a full length ballet with dozens of different components and roles, and requires rehearsals on Sundays in the large studio. Rehearsal schedules are posted each Monday for the following Sunday. In general, it is best not to schedule any family vacations or weekends out of town between September and November, if your child wants to be in The Nutcracker.

The Spring Recital is the culmination of the year’s study, also at the Hylton. Every class performs its own dance (all classes including pre ballet, ballet, modern, jazz, lyrical, hip hop, tap, character, and music students.) Again, older students should expect Sunday rehearsals starting around April. Young students should only have two Sundays. One of these days will include Photo Day, and is mandatory for all students, so please check your calendars and don’t plan anything for that weekend if your child wants to participate in the performance.

Details about dates, rehearsals, costumes, etc., are always sent out via email. Costume fees are listed on the Policies page of our website.

Photographing and videotaping with your electronic device is strictly prohibited in the Hylton. We always engage a professional photographer and videographer to document the performance, and families may purchase these if they wish.

We are always in need of chaperones to help things run smoothly backstage! Please let us know if you have friends or family members who may be able to help chaperone.

Work Study Opportunities

Gainesville Ballet has several work study opportunities available: cleaning the studios, or doing costume work. If you are interested in a work study program, or have another idea for work study, please contact the Office.

Volunteers and committees

We need your help! In 2015-16 we are starting to form committees to help with various tasks. Please contact the office if you would like to be on one of the following committees:

Chaperones (helping students and teachers at the theater during performances)

Concessions (selling items in the lobby at performances)

Advertising (contacting local business for advertising in our programs)

Fundraising (getting items donated from local businesses for Silent Auctions or Raffles)

Costumes (organizing costumes, creating costumes, embellishing costumes, transporting costumes, etc.)

Set Construction (do you have carpentry skills? Let us know!)

General Event Help (helping with decorations, transporting items, setting up, etc.)

Junior Company

The Junior Company is comprised of the most advanced students, by audition only. Junior Company dancers receive preparation for the professional dance world by dancing in our professional company performances, in supporting roles. Junior Company dancers are upheld to a professional standard and must sign a contract for attendance requirements.

Donations

Gainesville Ballet needs your donations! Tuition and ticket income alone doesn't come close to covering all of our costs. Rent is extremely high, and performance costs are also very high. If you are happy with Gainesville Ballet and would like to help ensure its success, please make a tax-deductible donation (no amount is too small), which can be done through our website, or by check:

<http://gainesvilleballetcompany.org/donate/>

You can also donate when shopping at Amazon.com, if you prefer not to give a monetary gift. Please go through this link, and a portion of your purchase will be donated to our nonprofit:

<http://smile.amazon.com/ch/46-2706604>

FAQ

Are you open today?

Please check the schedule online to view the school calendar for holiday closings.

Are you closing today due to the weather?

Please check our Facebook page, or your email, for any inclement weather notice.

Is there rehearsal today?

Please check your emails for all notices about rehearsal schedules.

What is the dress code?

Please check the "Class Attire" page on our website.

What is the tuition if I add another class?

Please check the tuition table on the website.

How do I buy tickets?

Go to the Hylton Box Office, or online at www.tickets.com (service charges apply online.)

Can my daughter move up a level?

The Director and the Teacher will have a consultation and make a recommendation. For the most part, everyone stays in their level for the whole school year, just as in regular school. Exams are held during the last week of class.

My daughter's costume doesn't fit.

Costumes will not always fit perfectly. It's normal for a costume to be a little snug, a little loose, or even a little itchy because of the decorations. Students must be measured several months in advance, and sometimes they go through a growth spurt. Ballet costumes normally are not made in numbered sizes, like retail clothes, but rather in small, medium, and large. We do our best to order the right size. If it really is impossible to fit into, we can try to order another size, if one is in stock, or we can sometimes order material from the company to sew into the undergarment section to lengthen the costume by a few inches.

Do I have to buy a performer ticket?

Performers who sit in the theater when not performing can get a \$5 performer ticket.

When is the recital?

Please check the "Events" or "Performances" page on the website, as well as emails we sent with this information.

Helpful tip!

Always read emails thoroughly and check your spam folder just in case. Don't wait until 30 minutes beforehand to find out if we're open, etc. Emailing is the fastest way to get in touch, rather than calling and leaving a voice mail.