

Nrityamala **D**ance **A**cademy

Guru Dr. Uma Vyjayanthimala Kallakuri

Parent/Student Handbook

Dear Students and Parents,

Welcome to the *Nrityamala Dance Academy* family! We are so excited to have you as you begin your dance journey.

This institution is designed to give the students a comprehensive course in Indian Classical Dance with a strong emphasis on learning the traditional repertoire involved. In order to optimize your success in NDA, we expect all Students to follow the guidelines outlined in this Handbook, as following the Handbook will ensure a safe, enjoyable and successful relationship between the Teacher and Student.

This is a school of Dance Education, and taking it lightly/not obeying the guidelines will be considered seriously. We ask that both the Students and Parents go through this Handbook thoroughly so the Student is aware of how to learn responsibly- this is to ensure they excel in what you are putting time and energy in!

Upon review of the Handbook, both Student and Parent (if Student is under 18 years of age) will have to print and return the Acknowledgement and Agreement form located at the end of this packet signed, stating that they are aware of, and commit to the guidelines.

Sincerely,

Guru Dr. Uma Vyjayanthimala Kallakuri
Founder and Artistic Director

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Section I. Dance Curriculum

A. Schedule:

- a. Dance Terms offered are:
 - i. Spring Term (January-May)
 - ii. Fall Term (August-December)
 - iii. Summer Intensive (2 Week sessions in June/July)
- b. Classes offered are:
 - i. Dance Training & Theory (Limited to Bharatnatyam and Kuchipudi)
 - ii. Strengthening and Conditioning (per instructors recommendation only)
 - iii. Costume and Make Up (for Guardian and 12+ Student)
- c. Styles
 - i. Bharatnatyam
 - ii. Kuchipudi
 - iii. Folk Dances (Not offered all year: per discretion of Instructor)
 - iv. Contemporary Classical (Not offered all year: per discretion of Instructor)
 - v. Temple Dances (Per discretion of Instructor and Eligibility of Student)
- d. Tuition
 - i. Fee is determined by the Level, and number of classes per week.
 - ii. Payable by the 1st week of the month by check or cash
 - iii. There is a late fee penalty of \$5.00 if paid on or later than the 10th day of the month
 - iv. Can do one- time payment per term

B. Enrollment

- a. Students may enroll at the age of 3+
- b. All students enrolled are required to take Group Classes
- c. Private Lessons are offered at discretion of the Instructor
- d. All students are required to take a Summer Intensive at Level 3 and above if they wish to progress to Graduation

C. Admission

- a. No student will be denied admission on the basis of nationality, gender, religion or ethnic origin.
- b. Students will only be admitted into the program with the approval of the Artistic Director

D. Bharatnatyam

- a. Diploma Course
 - i. Dance Experience (3-7 years)
 - ii. Level 1-Level 2 (Beginner)
 - iii. Level 3-Level 4 (Intermediate)
 - iv. Level 5-Level 7 (Advanced)
- b. Evaluation

- i. Formal Evaluations to determine progressing levels will occur once a year
 - ii. A student is considered to be making a considerable progress when she/ he keeps up with the attendance and class test scores
 - iii. Ability to concentrate and commitment to study are evaluated by the Guru periodically and are discussed with the Parents and Students if deemed necessary
 - iv. The students who fail in the class test ONCE will be put under probation for the rest of the coming 2 months to make up & show their dedication to learning dance. If no improvement is made either they will be put in a lower level class or asked to withdraw from the Dance class at the discretion of the Guru
- c. Graduation
- i. The student who completes a level with proper test scores from Evaluation will Graduate and be awarded a certificate of completion to move to the next level
 - ii. Once the student completes all the 7 levels of training to the satisfaction of the Guru, she/he will be given permission and blessings to give their 1st solo debut performance (Arangetram)
- d. Gajja Puja
- i. Upon completion of Level 1, the Teacher will order a Dance costume and Bells (Gajjalu, Ghungroo) for the Student
 - ii. They will be required to attend a Puja where they offer prayers to Nataraja and receive blessings from the Guru as they wear dance attire for the first time.
- e. Arangetram
- i. Upon completion of Level 7 and required Summer Intensives, a Student is eligible for their 1st debut solo performance
 - ii. Student may progress with performance after receiving blessings from the Guru: the event will be planned as per tradition
 - iii. Students who complete their Arangetram will be awarded the title of “Nritya Mani” by *Nrityamala Dance Academy*

E. Kuchipudi

- a. Diploma Course
- i. Dance Experience (3-7years)
 - ii. Level 1-Level 2 (Beginner)
 - iii. Level 3-Level 4 (Intermediate)
 - iv. Level 5-Level 7 (Advanced)
- b. Evaluation
- i. Formal Evaluations to determine progressing levels will occur once a year
 - ii. A student is considered to be making a considerable progress when she/ he keeps up with the attendance and class test scores
 - iii. Ability to concentrate and commitment to study are evaluated by the Guru periodically and are discussed with the Parents and Students if deemed necessary

- iv. The students who fail in the class test ONCE will be put under probation for the rest of the coming 2 months to make up & show their dedication to learning dance. If no improvement is made either they will be put in a lower level class or asked to withdraw from the Dance class at the discretion of the Guru
- c. Graduation
 - i. The student who completes a level with proper test scores from Evaluation will Graduate and be awarded a certificate of completion to move to the next level
 - ii. Once the student completes all the 7 levels of training to the satisfaction of the Guru, she/he will be given permission and blessings to give their 1st solo debut performance (Ranga Pravesam)
- d. Gajja Puja
 - i. Upon completion of Level 1, the Teacher will order a Dance costume and Bells (Gajjalu, Ghungroo) for the Student
 - ii. They will be required to attend a Puja where they offer prayers to Nataraja and receive blessings from the Guru as they wear dance attire for the first time.
- e. Ranga Pravesam
 - i. Upon completion of Level 7 and required Summer Intensives, a Student is eligible for their 1st debut performance.
 - ii. Student may progress with performance after receiving blessings from the Guru: the event will be planned as per tradition
 - iii. Students who complete their Ranga Pravesam will be awarded the title of “Nritya Mani” by *Nrityamala Dance Academy*

F. Post-Graduation Education

- a. Company Dancer
 - i. Upon completing the Final Graduation, a Student is ready to become a certified NDA dancer eligible for travelling performances and workshops
- b. Teacher Training
 - i. The student may train further to become a teacher at NDA learning to choreograph, play Nattuvangam, and by teaching Beginner Level lessons
- c. Research
 - i. The Student may also engage in research/scholarly work to pursue higher knowledge in the field with guidance of the Guru

Section II. Dance Class Etiquette

A. Rules

- a. Please:
 - i. Be on time for class! The instructor is owed your time so be aware of that commitment
 - ii. If you must leave during class, do so quietly (must take the permission of the teacher ahead of time)
 - iii. Be respectful by listening to your teacher
 - iv. Limit classroom talk –no gossip, inappropriate language or conversation
 - v. Treat classmates with respect and maintain positive attitude
 - vi. Accept your teacher's suggestions for improvement graciously
 - vii. Bring a water bottle to class
 - viii. Only students are allowed in dance class
 - ix. Reach few minutes early to warm up, stretch and balance in order to be ready for dance training
 - x. Pick up students after class closes in a timely manner (please inform ahead of time if they must stay late)
 - xi. Parents do not interrupt the class to speak with the Teacher until class is officially over
- b. Please Do Not:
 - i. Chew gum during class
 - ii. Touch the CD player, and other objects in the dance class
 - iii. Run around and disrupt the valuable time of the class

B. Dress Code

- a. Wear appropriate clothing to all classes and rehearsals. Depending on nature of rehearsal, certain outfits may be specifically required
- b. Approved Dance Wear:
 - i. NDA T Shirt
 - ii. T shirts
 - iii. Leggings
 - iv. Dance pants (must cover the knee)
 - v. Salwaar Suit
 - vi. Chunni/Scarf around the waist
 - vii. Practice Dance Saree (for dancers 18+)
- c. Avoid
 - i. Shorts
 - ii. Skirts
 - iii. Dresses
 - iv. Jeans/Denim
 - v. Revealing Clothing
- d. Please Note
 - i. Feet must always be visible to the Instructor
 - ii. Hair must be tied up tightly

C. Attendance

- a.** Attendance is important and will be taken for every class
- b.** If for any reason the student is unable to attend, call or e-mail 24 hours ahead of the class time
 - i.** If Instructor is not notified, it will count as an unexcused absence
- c.** When arriving late or joining a class already in progress, students must wait inside the dance hall at the edge of the dance class floor until given permission to join the class - this will keep distractions to a minimum
- d.** If Student misses 3 classes as the result of unexcused absences, they will be demoted to a lower Level
 - i.** Excused Absences include:
 - 1.** Illness
 - 2.** Family Emergency
 - 3.** ** All other potential reasons for absence must be discussed with the Instructor **

D. Learning Tools/ Homework

- a.** Bring 1 Notebook + Pencil/Pen every class
- b.** Bring Folder if specified by Teacher
- c.** Homework
 - i.** Please complete assigned Homework on time
 - ii.** Have student fill out Homework sheet with 'Time' and 'Dance' practiced
 - iii.** Parents must initial the day of practice
 - iv.** Recommended Homework Schedule:
 - 1.** Dance Experience-Level 1: 10min
 - 2.** Level 2- Level 3: 20 min
 - 3.** Level 4- Onwards: 30+min
 - 4.** ** Focus on old and new items equally, as well as on Dance Theory **

E. Audition Policy

- a.** Auditions will be conducted for dance numbers/dramas as per performance requirement
- b.** The dancer who auditioned and is selected for that particular piece/character should be committed to all the scheduled practices
- c.** Trying to get excused from being part of that dance half way through the choreography will put that dancer's future commitments/performances and training in jeopardy for wasting the Choreographer's time
- d.** Questioning the Choreographer's ability or getting into baseless discussions will automatically disqualify the dancer's participation in that particular performance

Section III. Performance Etiquette

A. Rules

- a. Remain backstage in the dressing area or the designated sitting area while in costume
- b. Be respectful of other dancers and remain quiet while backstage or in the designated area
- c. Only students are allowed in the designated sitting area and they should not run around and disrupt the ongoing performance
- d. Only designated volunteers and group captains will be monitoring those areas
- e. Students/Parents are requested to complete Make Up & wear the Costume by the given time and leave the child in the designated area on time

B. Dress Code

- a. Depending on the performance, Dancer must arrive at venue in costume or in NDA T Shirt and black leggings
- b. Please have all necessary materials in a clearly marked bag/kit with Dancer's name and phone number
- c. Follow Costume/ Make Up protocol that NDA has put in place

C. Events

- a. Throughout the dance season, various opportunities for performances arise within and outside of the community
- b. These opportunities will be given to Students as per the Teacher's discretion as she will account for all factors regarding the performance

D. Annual Performance

- a. It is mandatory for all students to participate in the Annual Performance
- b. This gives the students an opportunity to showcase their talents and hard work
- c. Students will not progress to the next Level if they do not participate in the Annual Performance

Section IV. Conduct/Discipline Policy

A. The following guidelines will be used when dealing with a behavior/discipline problem with any student.

- a. Step 1: The teacher addresses the problem with the student
- b. Step 2: The teacher addresses the problem, either in person or on the phone, with the parent.
- c. Step 3: A meeting will be called with parent(s)
- d. Step 4: The teacher will consider the matter and determine if termination of the student's participation in class is warranted. No refund of class fees will be issued upon that conclusion.

Section V. Nrityamala Cares

A. *Nrityamala Cares* is NDA's Outreach Program committed to serving the community through dance

- a.** Examples include:
 - i.** Fundraisers for charities
 - ii.** Entertainment for Senior citizens, local members of the community
 - iii.** Diversity Fairs
- b.** Performances will be executed via
 - i.** Workshops
 - ii.** Lecture Demonstrations
 - iii.** Residencies (longer lasting projects)
 - iv.** Ensemble or Solo Dances

Section VI. Miscellaneous

A. Dance Music

- a.** All music given to Students is the sole property of *Nrityamala Dance Academy* and may not be performed or distributed without the consent of the Artistic Director
- b.** Violators will be fined heavily and termination of NDA may be discussed

B. Dress Rentals

- a.** Dancer is responsible for all articles rented to them by *Nrityamala Dance Academy* and damage to NDA property must be compensated
- b.** There will be a rental fee associated with all costumes distributed by NDA

C. Lost and Found

- a.** Materials left behind on the premises will either be donated or discarded if not claimed after 2 weeks

D. Holidays Observed

- a.** National holidays and other festivals will be observed and there will be no class on that day (Look for announcements)
 - i.** Halloween
 - ii.** Thanksgiving
 - iii.** Christmas
 - iv.** New Year
 - v.** Diwali
 - vi.** Lakshmi Vratam

E. Snow Day Policy

- a.** Class will be closed if local schools have announced a Snow day
- b.** Class may also be cancelled if weather is intolerable (Look for announcements)

Acknowledgement and Agreement

This Student Handbook has been prepared for your information and understanding of the policies and practices of *Nrityamala Dance Academy*. Please read it carefully. Upon completion of your review of this handbook, sign the statement below and return it to the **Artistic Director** by the due date.

I, _____, have received and read a copy of the NDA Student Handbook which outlines policies, practices and my responsibilities as an NDA Dancer. I have familiarized myself with the content of this handbook. By my signature below, I acknowledge, understand, accept, and agree to comply with the information contained in the Handbook. I understand this handbook is not intended to cover every situation that may arise, but is simply a very basic guide to responsibilities, policies, practices and expectations of *Nrityamala Dance Academy*.

Student Name Printed

Parent/Guardian Name Printed

Date

Student Signature

Parent/Guardian Signature