Student Handbook

CHARLOTTE SCHOOL OF *Ballet*

2025-2026

627 South Sharon Amity Road
Charlotte, North Carolina, 28211
704 366-9675
www.Charlotteballet.com

The School:

The Charlotte School of Ballet was founded in 1968 by Gay Porter and was the first classical studio in Charlotte, NC. The studio offers a successful pre-professional training program that has prepared numerous dancers for careers in elite ballet companies, including New York City Ballet, American Ballet Theatre, and San Francisco Ballet. Students from the school have received scholarships to study with David Howard, Luigi, and at institutions such as UNCSA, USC, and Harvard Dance. The Charlotte School of Ballet has trained dancers for contemporary companies such as Hubbard Street Dance Chicago, Alvin Ailey, and Alonzo King's Lines Contemporary Ballet Company, as well as for careers on Broadway and in Television. Many of our dancers are accepted into prestigious summer programs throughout the United States. The Charlotte School of Ballet's training produces strong dancers with a clean technique that is adaptable to any dance style. Students are encouraged to study not only ballet, but also modern, jazz, tap, lyrical, contemporary and hip-hop, to meet the demands of dancers today.

Directors of the Charlotte School of Ballet

Gay Porter – Artistic Director

Gay was trained in London, England, at the Arts Educational School. Her classmates included Ben Stevenson, former Artistic Director of the Houston Ballet, and David Howard, known as "Teacher of the Stars" in New York and London. After an extensive career in England, Spain, France, and Germany, Gay came to the United States, where she danced in California before coming to North Carolina. As a choreographer, Gay has worked with the Charlotte Symphony, the Charlotte Opera, the Singing Christmas Tree, Central Piedmont Opera, and Theatre, the Actors Theatre, and the Charlotte Youth Ballet. Gay is a full teaching member of the Royal Academy of Dance, London, England, and holds the Advanced Teachers Certificate of the Cecchetti Council of America. North Carolina School of the Arts honored Gay as "Teacher of the Year" in 1994. Gay is the founder and Artistic Director of the Charlotte Youth Ballet. It is the premier performing company for young dancers in the area. Gay has directed and choreographed full-length productions of *Sleeping Beauty, Cinderella, The Nutcracker,* and *Coppelia* for the company. She has also created original ballets, including *The Wizard of Oz, Alice in Wonderland, Snow White, Thumbelina,* and Pinocchio, which she has set for companies throughout the United States.

Bridget Porter Young – Assistant Artistic Director

As a child, Bridget was selected to dance with New York City Ballet and Baryshnikov for the Washington Season. During this time, she performed at the White House for President Carter. She has danced with Louisville Ballet, North Carolina Dance Theatre, and Ocala Ballet. She toured the United States performing industrial shows and spent many summers performing in summer stock, including roles such as Jeannie in Brigadoon and Dream Laurie in Oklahoma. She also appeared in *All My Children* and *Guiding Light* while living in New York. Bridget has choreographed many short works, ballets, and musicals, including *South Pacific, The King and I, Once Upon a Mattress, Barnum,* and *Big River.* She also choreographed and directed *The Nutcracker* for the Pueblo Ballet.

Bridget is an A.B.T. Certified Teacher who has completed the A.B.T. Teacher Training Intensive in Pre-Primary through Level 3. She also holds the Teaching Certificate from the Royal Academy of Dance in London, England, and is a Fellow of the Cecchetti Council of America. Certified in Mat Pilates, she serves as the Artistic Director of the Charlotte Youth Ballet and the Chair of the Cecchetti Council of America's Southeast Committee.

Training Methods

The **Royal Academy of Dance** is a training method that begins with children at the age of three and takes students through a graded syllabus to the professional level. The Children's Syllabus includes classical work, free movement, and character dance. The Vocational Syllabus is designed for students who aspire to a career in ballet. It requires considerable dedication on the dancer's part to achieve the required level of training necessary for progression at this level. The Children's and Vocational syllabi, examined in eighty countries worldwide, are an extremely high level of training.

The **Cecchetti Council of America** training method begins with students as young as five years old and progresses to the Diploma Level. The Cecchetti syllabus is founded on the teachings of Enrico Cecchetti, who taught in London, Russia, and throughout Europe. As students' progress, they may also take examinations in this syllabus.

Examinations produce excellent results. Students who work for exams excel in their training and strive to reach their personal best. Having a goal encourages students to focus in class and build strength more quickly and requires a correctly demonstrated technique. It prevents dancers from only learning to perform tricks but instead makes them more versatile. Additionally, examinations are an unbiased evaluation of a student's progress. Please schedule a conference with your teacher if you would like to know more about examinations.

Solo Performance Awards: The Royal Academy of Dance has introduced the new solo performance awards. Students who have passed Grades I–III are eligible to take the Solo Performance Award for the grade level they have passed. The Solo Performance Award is a performance of three solos. Two solos are taken from the syllabus; the third is the student's and teacher's choice. Please schedule an appointment with your instructor to discuss participation in the solo performance awards if you are interested.

Class Placement

Each level is developmentally appropriate and builds upon what has been taught before, much like an academic grade level. Our class offerings have been carefully designed to provide a comprehensive program, from pre-ballet through advanced levels. Classes are divided by level based on teacher recommendations. In keeping with the tradition of classical ballet, each class level will be assigned a specific color and style of leotard. It is essential that children master each level before proceeding to the next, so they fully understand the movement and the quality it utilizes.

The advancement of a dancer happens through the correct repetition of steps and the development of physical strength until both mental and physical comprehension have been reached. Every student is unique and reaches this level of comprehension at different times. It is essential that students can successfully demonstrate and fully understand the movement before moving on to the next, more challenging level.

Our instructors are trained to evaluate the students and understand each child's physical development. If adjustments are needed, instructors will advise parents of a different placement.

Class Descriptions

Three- to Five-Year-Old Ballet/Tap is for children aged 3 - 5 years old. This class introduces children to the joy of movement and creative expression through music and the use of imagination. Students will learn basic ballet positions and steps in addition to developing coordination, listening skills, and rhythm.

Primary Ballet is for students aged 6–7. This class follows the syllabus of the Royal Academy of Dance Primary curriculum and the Cecchetti Primary work. Students work to maintain correct posture, placement, and body alignment throughout movements. Additionally, dancers learn to convey a story through movement and expressive use of their bodies. Students may take exams at this level.

R.A.D. Grades 1-8 Ballet is for students aged seven and above.

These classes follow the Royal Academy of Dance Syllabi, which include classical, character, and free movement work. Dancers develop technical strength, placement, proper posture, and artistic expression. Students who wish to take the RAD Exams must attend classes at least twice a week at the level being examined. There may be extra rehearsals with the pianist. Examination fees will be required for those students taking exams. These classes also cater to students who wish to progress through the Syllabus but not enter the exams. Examinations must be taken in sequence.

R.A.D. Vocational and Cecchetti Professional Exams

These examinations are for serious ballet students. Students must take at least six hours of ballet and pointe classes per week to be successful in these levels of examination. It is not possible to offer every level each year. If the level your student is working toward is not currently offered, please speak with the office to plan for coaching.

Cecchetti Classes, developed by Maestro Enrico Cecchetti, break down the technique of ballet into a science. Precise exercises are practiced in a set order in each class, each building on the next. This method builds solid foundations in technique while instilling a lovely quality of movement simultaneously. When ready, students are entered for examinations and must pass each level before moving on to the next level of study. Students are eligible to begin Cecchetti Grade 1 at age eight and work through to Grade 7.

Intermediate and Advanced Classes: Dancers who have technically attained the level required are permitted to enroll in these classes. These levels are designed to provide an increase in a dancer's challenges and represent the progression in a dancer's achievements and commitment to dance. All levels emphasize correct postural alignment, principles of turnout, balance, control, and barre and center exercises that become more complex and challenging at each level. The principles taught at each level build upon one another to create a solid foundation for technical strength and proficiency. Dancers in the levels are required to take at least three technique and two pointe classes per week.

Pointe Classes: Students begin pointe only with permission from instructors. Pointe is for serious ballet students. To dance on pointe proficiently, students are required to take a minimum of three technique classes a week in addition to pointe classes.
Maintaining and improving technique is essential to progress in pointe work. The Charlotte School of Ballet only allows students to begin pointe in the summer. **All pointe students are required to study at CSB for a minimum of four weeks during the summer.**

It is crucial to exercise caution and conservatism when determining the age at which a female student begins training on pointe. Usually, between the ages of 11 and 13, a student who has been training for at least four years is physically strong enough and

technically advanced enough to begin pointe work. It can be detrimental to start training on pointe too early in a dancer's career. At too early a stage, a dancer may not have a complete understanding of abdominal strength and may practice bad habits that can lead to injury or chronic conditions. There is no need to start pointe training too early. An accomplished dancer will easily be able to go on pointe with little effort and progress at a rapid pace. Many students who begin training too early become discouraged by the difficulty of proper execution, which they did not expect. It is much wiser to wait until the appropriate time when a dancer is physically ready to take on the work level and can achieve the results for which she hopes. Please see the pointe policies sheet for more information.

Jazz All Jazz classes combine traditional classical and Broadway jazz with the ever-changing styles of today. These classes are full of energy and fun, while also being challenging. Always age-appropriate in style, music, and, if applicable, costumes.

Modern Students are introduced to basic contemporary techniques, including contractions, oppositional energy, and improvisation. Students will explore dynamics in time and space and build an understanding of rhythm, gestures, shapes, suspension, release, fall and recovery, the use of momentum, and connecting breath with movement. Dancers will explore new ways of moving in combinations, floor work, partnering, and various methods of improvisation.

Tap All tap classes focus on the development of a sharpened sense of rhythm, coordination, and clarity of sounds incorporating warm-up, rhythm sequences across the floor, combinations, and routines.

Silver Swans

"Silver Swans® classes have been specifically designed for the over-55s, but whatever your age, if you are looking for a new way to keep fit and active, our ballet classes will put a spring in your step. Whether you've never danced before or want to get back into the swing of dancing your heart out, our classes have something for everyone. The RAD developed this program based on research into dance practice for older learners – classes are only taught by Silver Swan's licensees" (www.radusa.org).

Private Lessons can be arranged as requested. All private lessons must be set up through the business office. There is a $35.00 per hour studio fee as well as the instructor fee. We kindly ask for a 24-hour advance notice of any cancellation

Policies and Procedures

Registration

The registration fee of $60.00 and **the first and last month's tuition** is due upon each student's registration. Enrollment in the Charlotte School of Ballet is for the 2025-2026 school year. Students will be charged for the classes for which they have been registered, regardless of whether or not they have attended the classes. A **Registration Change form** must be submitted to the business office at least 30 days before a schedule change or withdrawal. **We will not accept verbal or electronic requests for schedule changes or withdrawals.**

Class Attendance

Attending class is the responsibility of each student. It is essential to participate in all classes to progress with training. Classes missed due to sickness, school holidays, and other obligations may be made up in another class. Classes missed due to ballet examinations, rehearsals, performances, or other unavoidable events will be rescheduled. Please inform us if you will be missing a lesson. Students are expected to arrive at the school in time for the start of their class. In the interest of injury prevention, the school reserves the right to have tardy students observe the class. Credit or refunds will not be given for classes not attended.

Makeup Classes

We encourage students to make up missed lessons so that they will not fall behind. Due to limited class sizes, make-up classes will be offered through Zoom if there is no room in a studio class. Please call the office if you plan to attend a makeup class. **Please make up any missed classes within 30 days.**

Online Classes Due to Health Concerns: Closure

Should it become necessary to close the studio due to a statewide health concern (such as COVID-19), classes will transition to online courses, utilizing platforms like Zoom. The annual tuition includes in-studio and online classes, should they become necessary. **A registration change form is required to drop online classes.** It may be submitted electronically if the studio is not open. The 30-day drop policy will be waived for the first 14 days from the date of the first online class. After the 14-day grace period, all registration change forms will include the 30-day drop policy. The 14-day grace period applies only to new online courses created in the event of a state-mandated or health-concern studio closure.

Inclement Weather

In the event of inclement weather, messages will be posted on social media and the studio phone to indicate whether classes will be held. Additionally, an email will be sent, unless there is a power loss, in which case it is not possible to do so. We do not necessarily follow the school system. Classes missed due to weather will not be rescheduled, but you are welcome to make them up in another class.

Parent-Teacher Communication

Teachers are always happy to speak with you! However, we request that families contact the office by phone or email to schedule a convenient time for a conference. Please do not stop teachers between classes as this delays the start of the next class.
Important news will be emailed monthly to inform you of upcoming events. Additionally, important dates will be posted on the website. Please ensure we have a current email address for you. If you are not receiving emails, please get in touch with the business office. Notices will be posted on the bulletin board beside the office. Please check frequently.

Videos
No dance or portion of choreography/class may be posted in its entirety on any social media outlet or website without permission from the school director.

Facilities
All students and their families are kindly requested to respect the facilities.
No food or drink is allowed in the studio. Adequate supervision should be provided for siblings. Please ensure that you have all your belongings before leaving. Clothes left for more than a few weeks will be donated to a local charity. Please throw away your trash. Large items and soiled diapers should be placed in the outside trash bins located behind the building. Please attend to young children when they are in the building.

Follow us on Facebook and Instagram.
If you're on Facebook or Instagram, follow #CharlotteSchoolofBallet. Stay updated with studio events and help us share what we're doing at the studio!

Class Attire
Please respect the traditions and art of dance and follow the dress codes. ***Students are required to be properly dressed for all classes.*** Street clothes should be worn over ballet attire when coming to and from class. Dance shoes should never be worn outside, as this brings dirt onto the dance floor and also wears out the shoes more quickly.

All female ballet students are required to wear the uniform leotard for the class level, pink ballet tights, and pink leather ballet shoes.
Hair should be neatly tied back into a bun. Short hair can be pulled back off the face with a headband. Please provide your child with the necessary items to secure their hair.
Teachers will happily assist. The Boutique has emergency hair kits for $1.00.

No skirts except by permission of the teacher; dancers are expected to ask the teacher if it is acceptable to wear a skirt. Dancers should not wear a skirt to class unless they are in pre-ballet or primary, in which case, a skirt is part of the uniform.

The Royal Academy of Dance syllabus includes character work, which requires a black character skirt and character shoes for students in grade I and above.

Tap students wear black tap shoes, a uniform ballet leotard, studio-approved black jazz pants, and a Black CSB t-shirt.

Jazz students wear black jazz shoes, studio-approved black jazz pants, a uniform ballet leotard, and Black CSB t-shirts.

Modern students wear the approved uniform, including leggings, a ballet class uniform leotard, and a Black CSB t-shirt.

Boys wear navy or black shorts, a white T-shirt, socks, and black shoes.
Students not properly dressed for class may be asked to sit and watch. Excessive disregard for uniform policy may result in a request for a Parent-Teacher Conference.
Please respect the traditions and art of dance and follow the dress codes.
Official uniform leotards, tights, and shoes can be purchased in ***The Ballet Boutique.***

Code of conduct

Students at the Charlotte School of Ballet are expected to show exemplary behavior by

• Being respectful of all students and teachers. Physical or verbal abuse, including "name-calling" or "bullying," is not tolerated.

* Avoid excessive talking, playing around, or not participating in class. Disrupting the class is distracting and makes it difficult for our teachers and students to continue the class.

* Showing respect for the studio property and the property of other students.

* Making sure all classmates feel included. We ask that if a student wishes to hand out party invitations or holiday gifts/cards, please ensure that every dancer in the class is included. If you need to limit the invitations, gifts, or cards to just a select few, the studio requests that you give them outside of the studio.

If a student does not abide by these rules, the teachers reserve the right to dismiss the student from the class until they can use appropriate behavior. The studio will not refund tuition for classes missed due to inappropriate behavior.

Recital

The Recital is the end-of-year performance highlighting all our students. Participation is encouraged. We assume you will be participating in the recital unless you provide written notice to the office before October 1, 2025. Otherwise, the family accounts will be charged with the appropriate fees. These fees are due during the current billing cycle and are non-refundable.

Costume and Recital Fees

A costume deposit of $75.00 per costume is required. The remaining costume balances are billed in March and will be due by a date to be determined based on the delivery of the costumes. Recital Performance fees due October 1, 2025, are as follows:

$120.00 per student
$180.00 per family

Performance fees and costume deposits are non-refundable.

Costumes will not be distributed until all year-end fees are paid in full. Costumes cannot be returned.

Class Changes

Written notice of 30 days must be given to the business office if a dancer decides to withdraw. *Class Change* forms can be found on the website or in the office. Tuition will accrue whether a dancer has attended until the *Class Change* form is received. Verbal or Electronic notifications will not be accepted.

Tuition

Fees are per student and are calculated on the number of classes registered. Families are responsible for the entire year. Tuition is based on an annual fee, and there are three payment options*:*

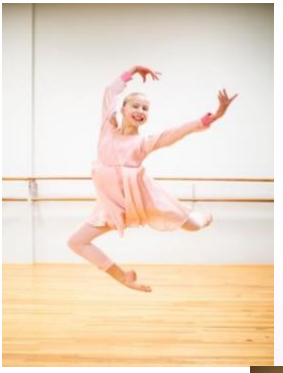
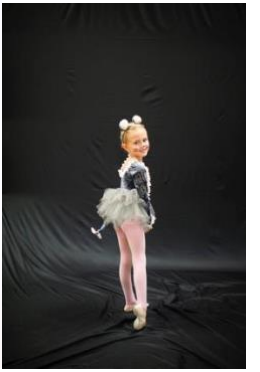
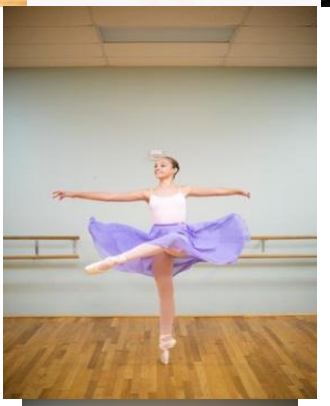
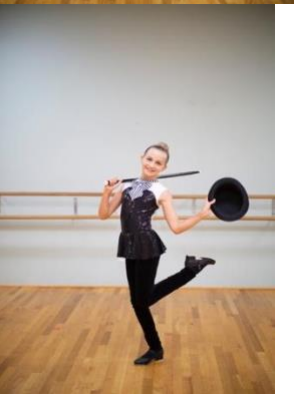
1. One payment is due in full by August 24th. Yearly payments reflect a discount if paid by the due date.
2. Two payments are due by August 24th and January 20th. Semester payments reflect a discount if paid by the due date.
3. Ten equal payments, with ***Payments 1 and 10 due*** at registration or by August 24. The remaining eight payments are due by the 20th of each month as follows: ***Payment 2 is*** *due 9/20,* ***Payment 3 is*** *due 10/20,* ***Payment 4*** *is due 11/20,* ***Payment 5 is*** *due 12/20,* ***Payment 6 is*** *due 1/20,* ***Payment 7*** *is due 2/20,* ***Payment 8*** *is due 3/20,* ***Payment 9*** *is due 4/20.*

PLEASE NOTE: This 10-payment option is not based on monthly tuition; instead, it is a payment plan structured around the annual tuition cost.

If payment is not received by the due date, a **$25 late fee** will be applied to the account. Please contact the business office if a situation arises. **Tuition is non-prorated and non-refundable.**

# of Classes *	Monthly (10) Payments	Semesterly (2) Payments	Yearly (1) Payment
30 minute pre ballet only	54	260	500
1	79	385	734
2	150	725	1450
3	215	1050	2100
4	275	1350	2700
5	330	1625	3250
6	370	1820	3650
7	420	2070	4150
Unlimited	475	2350	4700

* Classes longer than 75 minutes are billed as two classes

Annual Registration Fee of $60.00 per student
Private Lessons: Studio fee $35.00 per hour plus instructor fee. If you have any questions concerning payments, please get in touch with businessoffice@Charlotteballet.com

Adult Class Fees:
Drop-in rate: $22.00 per class
10 -Class Card: $160.00
20-Class Card $280.00