

THE SCHOOL
at the
**MARK
MORRIS
DANCE
CENTER**



Student Handbook 2023-2024

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I. Introduction

The Mark Morris Dance Group is a non-profit performing arts organization comprised of two branches: a professional dance company that performs the dance and opera works of world-renowned choreographer, Mark Morris, and the Mark Morris Dance Center, the rehearsal home of the Dance Group, the Education and Community Engagement programs, and a diverse collection of NYC community members who love and make their profession in dance. We believe Dance is for Anybody!

The School at the Mark Morris Dance Center offers year-round, community-based dance and music programming in a fully inclusive and nurturing environment, located in the heart of the Brooklyn Cultural District. The School's diverse and professional faculty provides progressive and non-competitive instruction with classes accompanied by live music. We are an intentionally non-recital school with a student-centered, culturally responsive instructional approach based on our core values of Artistic Excellence, Creativity, Community, and Access. The School is split into two divisions: The Children and Teen Program (ages 6 through 18) and Early Childhood Program (ages 18 months through 6 years).

COMMUNITY AGREEMENT & GUEST EXPECTATIONS

The Mark Morris Dance Center is committed to maintaining a safe and supportive environment for all students, faculty, musicians, and staff, free from harassment, intimidation, bullying and discrimination on the basis of actual or perceived race, color, creed, ethnic or national origin, sex, sexual orientation, gender identity or expression, disability, age, weight, body type, religion, medical condition, marital status, socio-economic status, citizenship/immigration status, or veteran status. Please [visit our website](#) to read more about Guest Expectations.

WELCOME!

II. School Structure

The School is an inclusive, non-recital, recreational environment; we believe “Dance is for Anybody!” and do not hold auditions. Student learning is shared during periodic invited Family and Friends Days at the end of each semester and, when applicable, of each camp.

Early Childhood Program

The Early Childhood program is for students ages 18 months to six years old. This program is run in 8-week sessions and is designed to introduce students to the dance studio, cultivate a love of dance and music, and emphasize development in fine, gross, and locomotor skills through a variety of play-based activities. Children are placed according to age and have the option of participating in We Dance: Toddler and Grown Up Movement from 18 months through 4 years of age. At age 4, children progress to Creative Dance, the first drop-off option in the school, and remain in that class until age 6.

Children and Teens Program

The Children and Teens program is for students 6 to 18 years old. Students can choose a specific technique to study and have the option of participating in: Modern, Jazz, Ballet, Hip-Hop, Tap, West African, and/or Music and Singing classes. Leveling is determined by prior experience in the respective dance form and students are expected to stay in the same level for one academic year (32-weeks) at a minimum, with some students staying at the same level for two years. While there is no penalty for absences, the more a student attends class, the more quickly they will progress through the levels. Young children beginning dance for the first time, including those coming from the Creative Dance program, will start in the Fundamentals A level, progress to Fundamentals B, and then Level 1 up through Level 5. Children who are new to dance and in their early adolescence have the option to enroll in the Beginner Level Teen classes in each of the techniques and will eventually join Levels 3, 4, or 5 when deemed ready by their teacher.

Specialized Study Program

The Specialized Study program has options for those students in the Children and Teens program who are interested in a more intensive experience of dance. It includes the Student Companies, the Arts Immersion Fellowship, the Teen Volunteer Assistant program, and Teen Internships. Each of these opportunities requires an audition or further application of some type and there is an expectation of deeper commitment from students enrolled in these programs.

The School’s programs also include camp opportunities on a seasonal basis. More information about camps can be found by visiting:

<https://markmorrisdancegroup.org/dance-center/the-school/dance-camps/>

III. Registration

Registration is accepted on a first-come, first-served basis. Class size is limited. Online registration is preferred and strongly encouraged, although you can also register in person at the Mark Morris Dance Center. In the event of an emergency or software malfunction, registrations can be processed over the phone.

Early Childhood: There is no priority registration access in the Early Childhood program. Registration is open through the first week of each session in the Early Childhood program. Registration dates can be found on our website on the Calendars page and always opens at 12:00pm (noon). Every child must re-register for each session.

Children and Teen: Students returning from the previous semester have access to the priority registration week (one week prior to general registration) and should register for the class and level recommended by their teacher (sent via email from schooladmin@mmdg.org in July). Priority registration can be accessed via the link to the Family Resource Page sent to families in their recommendation email. Students new to The School are recommended to take a trial class or visit our [“What Level Should I Sign Up In?”](#) page for more information. Registration is open through the first four weeks of each semester in the Children and Teens program. Registration dates can be found on our website on the Calendars page and always opens at 12:00pm (noon). Families have the option to register for the entire 32-week academic year or for one semester at a time.

Wait List: Classes are closed once capacity is reached and you will be unable to register online. You may choose a different class or register for the wait list. No payment is required to be added to the wait list. If and when a space becomes available, you will be contacted via email or phone by staff from The School. Full payment is expected upon enrollment.

Trial Classes: Trial Classes are available if there is still space in a class by the first day of the session. Students are allowed to attend one class as a trial free of charge during a respective program’s registration period. Trialing a class does not guarantee a space to be held for registration. Families are encouraged to register as soon as possible following a trial class to ensure they can secure a space.

III. Registration (cont.)

Class/Level Adjustments:

Early Childhood: Students in We Dance: Toddler and Grown-up Movement and Creative Dance are placed according to age. Curricula are designed to meet children at their respective developmental stages. Students should not register outside of their appropriate age bracket.

Children and Teen: Students will be placed in class based on their registration selections. However, it may be necessary to reassign a student to a different class of a more appropriate level. The first four weeks of each semester is considered a “placement period.” Faculty or families may reach out to the administrative staff to request a level change during this period.

Cancellations: The School reserves the right to cancel any class with an enrollment of less than five students. In the event of class cancellation, we will contact you with a second option, or a full or pro-rated refund will be given. Please see the Tuition Policies section of this handbook for information on cancelling your registration.

Age Restrictions: To be eligible for class registration, a child must reach the age requirement on or before the first day of class.

Communication: The School at the Mark Morris Dance Center communicates with families via email and text messaging through our registration software, Active Network. Please be sure to keep your contact information in the Active system updated to ensure you receive the most relevant information from The School. Families can also access information on the Family Resource Page linked in their registration confirmation email. All questions regarding classes should be directed to administrative staff at schooladmin@mmdg.org and not individual teaching artists.



IV. Tuition Policies

The School at the Mark Morris Dance Center is committed to upholding its core values of Community, Access, Artistic Excellence and Creativity. To ensure access to excellent dance education for the entire community, tiered pricing options, in collaboration with our scholarship program, allow us to take collective action to reduce financial barriers that have traditionally prevented some students and families from participating. As a non-profit organization, Mark Morris Dance Group subsidizes costs that are not met by Tier 1 and 2 tuition options. Families who can, should select tuition option Tier 3 so that we can continue to offer our programs with additional support staff, live music, and in our state-of-the-art facilities. Please find all tuition options below:

Tuition and Payment Options:

Early Childhood	Registration Fee Every 8 Weeks	Tier 1 Pricing 8 Weeks	Tier 1 Pricing 16 Weeks	Tier 2 Pricing 8 Weeks	Tier 2 Pricing 16 Weeks	Tier 3 Pricing 8 Weeks	Tier 3 Pricing 16 Weeks
45 min/wk	\$15/Child	\$170	n/a	\$195	n/a	\$225	n/a
Children and Teen Program	Registration Fee - Once per year	Tier 1 Pricing Full Year	Tier 1 Pricing Semester	Tier 2 Pricing Full Year	Tier 2 Pricing Semester	Tier 3 Pricing Full Year	Tier 3 Pricing Semester
45 min/wk	\$30/Child	\$560	\$295	\$645	\$350	\$730	\$385
60 min/wk	\$30/Child	\$590	\$310	\$680	\$360	\$770	\$410
75 min/wk	\$30/Child	\$630	\$330	\$720	\$410	\$815	\$425
90 min/wk	\$30/Child	\$665	\$345	\$765	\$395	\$860	\$448
STUDENT COMPANY FLAT FEE PER STUDENT (IN ADDITION TO TUITION FOR CLASSES)							\$400

Pricing Tier	Family Income Level*	Household Size
Scholarship	Families who qualify for WIC Assistance	See chart in link
Tier 1	\$65,000-\$95,500 per year	< or = 4
Tier 2	\$95,501-\$231,250 per year	< or = 4
Tier 3	\$231,251 per year	< or = 4

*Income levels determined based on 2023 Federal Income Tax brackets

IV. Tuition Policies (cont.)

Scholarships: During 2023-2024, \$25,000 in need-based scholarships will be provided to a limited number of qualifying students and will be awarded via a first-come, first serve basis. Applicants will be notified of results on a rolling basis until all scholarships are distributed. Applications are available on our website at <https://markmorrisdancegroup.org/dance-center/the-school/>

Early Childhood: Due to limited space, each family who applies and is selected for a scholarship will receive it for one (1) child in one (1) of our Early Childhood programs. Scholarships are non-transferrable to the next session. A new application must be submitted for each 8-week session. Scholarship application periods for these programs are as follows:

Fall Session 1	Aug. 29 – Oct. 2, 2023 notified by Oct. 2, 2023
Fall Session 2	Oct. 24 – Nov. 20, 2023 notified by Nov. 20, 2023
Winter Session	Jan. 9 – Feb. 6, 2024 notified by Feb. 6, 2024
Spring Session	March 19 – April 8, 2024 notified by April 8, 2024
Summer Session	May 3 – May 25, 2024 notified by June 8, 2024

Children and Teen: Due to limited space, each family who applies and is selected for a scholarship will receive it for one (1) class per child interested in our Children and Teen programs. Families may elect to enroll on scholarship for one semester or for the entire academic year. Scholarships are transferrable to the second semester in the Children and Teens program of the same academic year in which the scholarship was awarded. A new application must be submitted for each new academic year and for any additional programs students enroll (summer or school-year camps). Scholarship application periods for these programs are as follows:

Semester 1	Aug. 22 – Oct. 14, 2023 notified by Oct. 14, 2023
Semester 2	Jan. 9 – March 2, 2024 notified by March 2, 2024

Mid-Winter, Spring, and Summer Camp: Scholarships will be awarded via a lottery system and applications for scholarships will open the same day as camp registration. Awardees will be notified of results 4 weeks prior to the beginning of camp. Due to limited space, each family who applies and is selected for a scholarship will receive it for one (1) child in one (1) of our camp programs. Scholarships are non-transferrable to the regular academic year in The School. Scholarship application periods for these programs are as follows:

Mid-Winter Camp	Dec. 12, 2023 – Feb. 10, 2024 notified by Feb. 10, 2024
Spring Break Camp	Dec. 12, 2023 – March 23, 2024 notified by March 23, 2024
Summer Camps + Intensives	Dec. 12, 2023 – May 19, 2024 notified by May 19, 2023

IV. Tuition Policies (cont.)

Tuition is due in full upon registration, based on your selected payment option. We accept cash, check, VISA, MasterCard, American Express, and Discover Card. Checks should be made payable to “Discalced, Inc.”. A \$15 fee will be due for all checks returned for any reason. The fee must be paid in cash within one week from the time the owner of the account is notified. Students who register after classes have begun are still responsible for full tuition payment. Tuition will not be prorated. (This includes wait-listed students).

Registration Cancellation: Tuition is refundable within the registration period of respective programs, less a \$15 processing fee, the pro-rated cost of past classes (whether attended or not), and any applied discounts. If a student must withdraw from class, written notification is required and must be sent to schooladmin@mmdg.org.

Discounts: We offer a 15% discount for students who register for multiple classes and for siblings in the Children & Teens Program.



V. School Policies

Faculty and Staff: All faculty in The School at the Mark Morris Dance Center are highly qualified teachers and are observed on an annual basis to encourage excellence in teaching practice. Please note that the Mark Morris Dance Center also serves as a resource to the field by hosting a Teaching Artist Training Program, Dance Accompaniment Training Program, and regular professional development opportunities on-site. It is likely that your child will have an observer present in their dance class at least once throughout the course of the academic year. Faculty should not be contacted directly for information about The School at the Dance Center; please direct all inquiries to schooladmin@mmdg.org.

Make-up Classes: There are no make-up classes for missed classes in either the Children and Teen or Early Childhood programs.

Absences: It is not necessary to report a student's absence. However, anticipated absences of several classes should be reported to schooladmin@mmdg.org.

Class Times: Classes begin and end on time. Students arriving more than 15 minutes late may be asked to observe the class to ensure their physical safety.

Studio Use: Whenever possible, classes will take place in consistently assigned studios from week to week. Periodically, the Dance Center adjusts the use of its 9 studios for special events. Class will never take place in a studio not appropriate for the respective dance form or class size. Please check in with our Visitor Service Assistants, or check the monitor located in the ground floor lobby, when you arrive at the Dance Center to ensure you know the studio in which your class is taking place that day.

Level Placement: Class level recommendations are sent to Spring semester students in July prior to Fall registration. Level assignments are based on age and proficiency. As a student progresses through the program they may be asked to repeat a level in order to ensure that they remain in an appropriately challenging classroom environment. Systematic progression through each level should not be the expectation. It is important that each student demonstrates proficiency before moving on.

Observing Class: Doors to the studios are kept closed while classes are in session. There are windows into the studio on each door. Families are not permitted to be in the dance studio and are discouraged from observing through the window during class, as this is distracting for all children attempting to focus on what they are learning. We invite families into the studio for our Family and Friends Days at the end of each semester to provide a chance for them to engage in their child(ren)'s learning.

V. School Policies (cont.)

Photo/Media Policy: Our marketing department will periodically visit classes over the course of the academic year to capture content. Families can opt out of having their child's likeness captured by photo or video during the registration process. To protect the privacy of our entire student body, families are not permitted to video or photograph classes. This policy is relaxed during Family and Friends Days. Additionally, we discourage students from connecting with faculty on social media until they have been out of The School for at least a 12-month time period.

Student Company: Admission into this program is by audition only. Auditions take place every September. No make-up audition dates or video auditions are permitted. More information on this program can be found on our [Student Company page](#).

Arts Immersion Fellowship: Admission into this program is by application only. More information can be found on our [Arts Immersion Fellowship page](#).

Pointe class: Students new to pointe may only register during the Fall registration period and must be recommended for pointe class by their ballet teacher from the semester directly prior. All students interested in taking pointe for the first time who have not been recommended by a teacher, should register for pre-pointe class. Throughout the first 4-weeks of the semester, pre-pointe students will be assessed on pointe readiness by two teaching artists and, at the end of the four weeks, will either remain in pre-pointe or be recommended for Pointe Level 1. Pointe students must take a ballet technique class in addition to their weekly pointe class. Pointe shoes should not be purchased until pointe-readiness is confirmed. More information can be found on our [pointe information sheet](#).



VI. Health and Safety Procedures

Attendance: Teaching Artists and Assistant Teaching Artists take weekly attendance in the studio to ensure that all students are in the correct place. If a student is not in class for 3 weeks in a row, faculty fill out a roster discrepancy form and The School will contact the family.

Emergency/First Aid Procedures: All Visitor Services Assistants and many faculty members are CPR/First Aid certified and there are First Aid kits in every studio, as well as an AED at the Front Desk. The studios are all connected to the Front Desk by an internal phone system and faculty are trained as to what to do in the event of an emergency. The Dance Center also has a comprehensive evacuation plan and provides regular training to faculty and staff in safety protocol. If a non-emergent incidence takes place while a student is in class, a family may be asked to assist the staff in filing an incident report. Families who need Epi-pens or other medical supports to be kept onsite should reach out to schooladmin@mmdg.org.

Illness/Injury: Students who are feeling ill should remain at home and rest until they are well. Families should review the Health & Safety page [on our website](#). Students who are injured should not dance unless their symptoms have subsided or, in the case of a more serious injury, they are cleared by a medical practitioner, but they are encouraged to attend class to observe. The Dance Center has a [Wellness Center](#) on-site where a variety of dance-informed physical therapists and somatics experts work, should a family be looking for support in this area.

Faculty Supervision: All programs are staffed with at least a two-person teaching team present. At no time will a student be left alone with a staff or faculty member in a non-public space. The Mark Morris Dance Center does not tolerate harassment of any kind; please refer to the community agreement and code of conduct area of this handbook for more information. Families can reach out to schooladmin@mmdg.org or access an anonymous feedback form to report violations of this policy to the Education staff by [clicking here](#).

VII. Classroom Expectations

Class Readiness: Students must arrive on time for class, properly dressed and ready to dance. Please access our dress code at the end of this handbook or at <https://markmorrisdancegroup.org/dance-center/the-school/school-calendar-policies-and-procedures/>. A student arriving more than 15 minutes late may be asked to observe class. Important warm-up exercises take place in the beginning of class and a student who is not properly warmed-up risks being injured. Late arrivals are also disruptive to the class.

Bathroom Breaks: Students should remember to use the bathroom before class begins to minimize interruptions. If it is necessary to use the bathroom during class, the student should ask the teacher for permission and return to class promptly. Assistance will be provided by a member of the teaching team as needed.

Class disruptions: Students who are disruptive will be given a warning. If they continue to be disruptive, they will be asked to observe the class. If a student continues to disregard teacher instructions, The School will contact the family.

Bullying: The School at the Mark Morris Dance Center is committed to providing a safe and healthy learning environment for each member of its community. The School does not tolerate behavior that infringes on the safety of any student. Neither students nor faculty shall intimidate, harass, or bully another student through words or actions. Such behavior includes: direct physical contact, such as hitting or shoving; verbal assaults, such as teasing or name-calling; and social isolation or manipulation. The School expects students and/or staff to immediately report incidents of bullying in person, to schooladmin@mmdg.org or through the anonymous feedback form [linked here](#). Faculty and/or staff who witness such acts will take immediate steps to intervene when safe to do so. Each complaint of bullying will be promptly investigated



VIII. Lobbies and Waiting Areas

The studios, lobbies, and waiting areas of the Mark Morris Dance Center are home to the professional performing company: the Mark Morris Dance Group, The School, Community Programs, Adult Programs, Dance for PD programs, Professional Development programs, and a variety of nationally and internationally known artists renting rehearsal space. Students must conduct themselves with respect for the surrounding community while in class and while waiting for class in the lobbies and bathrooms, including keeping the volume to a respectable level. We ask for caregiver support in upholding each of the policies detailed below.

Drop-off: Students should arrive 15 minutes prior to class time in order to change and prepare for class.

Space Access: The lobbies should not be used as a space for play dates or meetings. We have a variety of spaces available to rent for meeting purposes. Please reach out to rentals@mmdg.org for more information.

Space Safety: For the safety and consideration of all those who use our space, please do not run/use scooters and monitor children (including siblings) to ensure they are not running, using scooters, or otherwise causing a disturbance in the lobbies and waiting areas. Students ages 10 and under should be accompanied by an adult if they are entering the 4th or 5th floor balcony spaces. Caregivers of all children ages 10 and under must accompany and supervise children in the lobbies, waiting areas, locker rooms, and bathrooms, and wait with them until their respective teacher calls them to enter the studio for class. Children over the age of 10 may enter the Dance Center unaccompanied at the discretion of their families, but will not be under adult supervision until they enter their class.

Space Care: Each person in the lobby is expected to properly dispose of their trash and recycling. It is everyone's responsibility to keep our Dance Center clean for everyone to enjoy.

Space Flow: Please do not crowd around the studio door, as this prevents the preceding class from exiting. After class, children will be dismissed to their caregivers from the studio door.

Pets: Please leave pets at home as they are not permitted in the Dance Center. Service animals are permitted.

Pick-up: Students must be picked up on time. Caregivers who arrive late to pick up a child should call the Dance Center to notify staff. Children who are waiting for more than 5 minutes after the end of their class will be brought to the ground floor office and supervised by a member of the staff.

IX. Accessibility

The School at the Mark Morris Dance Center proudly instructs disabled and non-disabled students in an inclusive instruction environment. All faculty have access to regular training in providing adaptive and inclusive learning environments and strategies for teaching a diverse set of learners. Additionally, families have the option to share information related to specific student needs during the registration process in the accommodations section of the registration form. All information shared at registration by families is shared with faculty during the registration period.

Students who are Deaf/Hard of Hearing can reach out to make a plan with education staff for support, which may include use of closed captioning in the studio or an ASL interpreter. Students who are not able to travel to the Dance Center for class because of the nature of their disability can reach out to staff to set up access to a virtual version of class.

Classes in The School including Creative Dance (Ages 4-6), Fundamentals A (Ages 6-8), and Fundamentals B (Ages 7-9), are typically staffed with Teaching Artists and Assistant Teaching Artists. Classes in Levels 1-5 do not typically have Assistant Teaching Artists staffed in them. Creative Dance classes have a class capacity of 18 students or less and Fundamentals A and B students have a class capacity of 20 students or less. Classes in Levels 1-5 have a capacity of 20-25 or less depending on the size of the studio. Additional staff may be placed as a support in levels outside of Creative Dance and Fundamentals A and B on a case-by-case basis in consultation with the education staff.

Adaptive Dance classes are for those students who wish to opt into a class specifically for dancers with disabilities. These classes have a capacity of 10 students or less and are staffed with a Teaching Artist and at least one Assistant Teaching Artist. Family members or Caregivers may opt to join a student in the Adaptive Dance classroom if they wish to do so.

Please reach out with any questions about these and any other accessibility needs to schooladmin@mmdg.org. There is no deadline by which to reach out. Information about the physical accessibility of our space can be found on the [Visit the Dance Center page](#).

IX. Dress Code

Dance Genre	Top	Bottom	Shoes
Modern Dance and Creative Dance	Solid-color leotard or solid-color t-shirt	Footless tights, leggings, or long shorts	Barefoot
Ballet	Solid-color leotard or t-shirt	Tights or black leggings; ballet skirt optional	Ballet Slippers required
Jazz Dance	Solid-color leotard or t-shirt	Tights, leggings, or long shorts	Jazz Shoes required
Hip-Hop	Solid-color leotard or solid-color t-shirt	Athletic pants/leggings, or long shorts	Clean sneakers (shoes should only be worn in the studio, not on the street before/after class)
Tap Dance	Solid-color leotard or solid-color t-shirt	Tights, leggings, or long shorts	Tap shoes required
West African Dance	Solid-color leotard or solid-color t-shirt	leggings, or long shorts; lapa skirt or dabas pants optional	Barefoot
Music and Singing	Comfortable clothing	Comfortable clothing	
We Dance	Comfortable play clothes	Comfortable play clothing	Barefoot

- Students should wear appropriate dance attire. Solid-colored clothing is recommended.
- Long hair must be pulled back in either a bun or ponytail; short hair must be pulled back away from the face.
- The following items are prohibited:
 - oJeans, crop tops, short shorts, loud/busy prints, pajamas, jewelry
 - oJewelry may not be worn in class. Put jewelry in your dance bag or, preferably, leave it at home to avoid losing it. Keep dance bags and other belongings in a locker in the dressing rooms.
- Visit the [F.A.Q's](#) for more information on where you can find dancewear.