

fort wayne  
**ballet**  
**AUER ACADEMY**

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**KAREN GIBBONS-BROWN**  
ARTISTIC DIRECTOR

Academy Handbook

*Revised August 2023*

Auer Academy of Fort Wayne Ballet  
300 E. Main St. Fort Wayne, IN 46802

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# **Fort Wayne Ballet**

## **General Academy Information**

Auer Academy of Fort Wayne Ballet is the official school of Fort Wayne Ballet, Inc. Enrollment at the Academy is open to students 3 years of age and older, regardless of race, nationality, or ethnic origin.

Administrative staff are available during business hours.

(10:00am-5:00pm during academic year)

Telephone: 260-484-9646

\*\*Meetings with faculty are available by appointment. Please contact Raleigh Sparrow to schedule a meeting. \*\*

**Raleigh Sparrow**, Academy Registrar

[rsparrow@fortwayneballet.org](mailto:rsparrow@fortwayneballet.org)

**Mahlon Houlihan**, Chief Financial Officer

[mhoulihan@fortwayneballet.org](mailto:mhoulihan@fortwayneballet.org)

**Christina Brinker**, Chief Operating Officer

[cbrinker@fortwayneballet.org](mailto:cbrinker@fortwayneballet.org)

## Curriculum

The academic curriculum is a safe but immersive curriculum, designed with childhood development (physical, cognitive, and emotional) concepts at the core. Our curriculum is based largely in the American Ballet Theater (ABT) National Training Curriculum (NTC). This focuses on building a strong foundation in ballet technique with an emphasis on proper placement and safe progression of movement while remaining sensitive to the developmental needs of younger dancers. The curriculum combines child psychology, child physiology, and dance education into a comprehensive and complete dance education curriculum. With a solid curriculum in place, we rely on staff and faculty to engage your child as an individual who will develop in his/her own time. Our instructors are ABT NTC certified.

### Pre-Ballet / Primary Division (ages 3-6):

As your young child grows, 3-6 year olds can enroll in the Pre-Ballet Division, a graduated creative movement program. Creative movement combines skill development, musicality, and self-expression. All classes require the student to be the age of the class level by August 1<sup>st</sup> of the academic year the student is enrolling.

#### Pre-Ballet Classes / Primary A & Primary B:

| <u>Class Name</u>             | <u>Age</u>  | <u>Recommended Times/Week</u> | <u>Class Length</u> |
|-------------------------------|-------------|-------------------------------|---------------------|
| <b>Come Dance With Me</b>     | 3 years old | Once per Week                 | 30 min              |
| <b>Dance Around the World</b> | 4 years old | Once per Week                 | 30 min              |
| <b>Creative Movement I</b>    | 5 years old | Once per Week                 | 45 min              |
| <b>Creative Movement II</b>   | 6 years old | Once per Week                 | 1 hour              |

#### Uniform:

Girls- pastel pink Mirella FWB style leotard (Style # M207C), Pink seamless tights, pink leather ballet slippers, and hair in a ballet bun. Girls enrolled in Creative Movement I and II will also need a short, pink skirt for class. Hair in a neat ballet bun.

Boys- White shirt, black pants or shorts, white ankle socks, black leather ballet slippers, hair pulled back.

**\*\*All dress code items available through the Fort Wayne Ballet's Boutique.**

## Lower School Division

The goal of the Auer Academy of Fort Wayne Ballet is to provide a complete structured curriculum that stresses a quality dance foundation regardless of future plans in the dance field, and to nurture students' natural love of movement.

### Ballet Technique Classes

| Class Name | Times/Week | Class Length |
|------------|------------|--------------|
|------------|------------|--------------|

|                  |                                    |        |
|------------------|------------------------------------|--------|
| <b>Primary C</b> | Two classes per Week (recommended) | 1 Hour |
|------------------|------------------------------------|--------|

**Uniform-** Girls- White Mirella style leotard with pink tights (Leotard Style #M207L); short pink skirt, pink leather ballet slippers, hair in a neat bun.

Boys- White shirt, black pants or shorts, white ankle socks, black leather ballet slippers, hair pulled back.

|                  |                                    |        |
|------------------|------------------------------------|--------|
| <b>Ballet IA</b> | Two classes per Week (recommended) | 1 Hour |
|------------------|------------------------------------|--------|

**Uniform-** Girls- White Mirella style leotard with pink tights (Leotard Style #M207L); short pink skirt, pink leather ballet slippers, hair in a neat bun.

Boys- White shirt, black pants or shorts, white ankle socks, black leather ballet slippers, hair pulled back.

|                  |                                      |        |
|------------------|--------------------------------------|--------|
| <b>Ballet IB</b> | Three classes per Week (recommended) | 1 Hour |
|------------------|--------------------------------------|--------|

**Uniform-** Please see Uniform statement on page 6, pink seamless tights, pink leather ballet shoes, hair in a neat bun

Boys- See Men's Technique Uniform on page 6

|                   |                                      |            |
|-------------------|--------------------------------------|------------|
| <b>Ballet IIA</b> | Three classes per Week (recommended) | 1.25 Hours |
|-------------------|--------------------------------------|------------|

**Uniform-** Please see Uniform statement on page 6, pink seamless tights, pink leather ballet shoes, hair in a neat bun

Boys- See Men's Technique Uniform on page 6

|                   |                                      |           |
|-------------------|--------------------------------------|-----------|
| <b>Ballet IIB</b> | Three classes per Week (recommended) | 1.5 Hours |
|-------------------|--------------------------------------|-----------|

**Uniform-** Please see Uniform statement on page 6, pink seamless tights, pink leather ballet shoes, hair in a neat bun

Boys- See Men's Technique Uniform on page 6

**Ballet IIIA** Four classes per Week (recommended) 1.5 Hours

**Uniform-** Please see Uniform statement on page 6, pink seamless tights, pink leather ballet shoes, hair in a neat bun

**Boys-** See Men's Technique Uniform on page 6

**Men's Ballet Technique Classes** (In addition to curricular ballet classes)

| Class Name | Times/Week | Class Length |
|------------|------------|--------------|
|------------|------------|--------------|

|                                      |                             |         |
|--------------------------------------|-----------------------------|---------|
| <b>Men's Beginner / Intermediate</b> | Once per Week (recommended) | 1 Hours |
|--------------------------------------|-----------------------------|---------|

**Uniform** - Please see Uniform statement on page 6, black tights, black leather ballet shoes

**\*\*\* Please note if they are not in their correct uniform, your dancer may be asked to sit out of class. Being properly dressed is not only a part of the discipline of the art, but for the safety of movement for your dancer.**

**Uniform Statement:** As a body develops, a leotard can sometimes feel bare. We are working with a new company to find a leotard to fit our needs and the needs of your dancer. As we get more information, we will keep you all updated.

## Alternative Class Descriptions for Lower & Upper School

**Tap – Primary C or higher:** Tap classes are the alternative dance class the Artistic Staff recommends first for students because it strengthens students' sense of rhythm, versatility, and teaches control of the ankles and feet.

**Uniform:** Bloch "TapFlex" lace up, split sole tap shoes (black), level appropriate uniform, with dance shorts or pants

**Jazz – Ballet IIB or higher:** This alternative dance form encourages students' flexibility and self-confidence. Students find greater success if they are 12 years or a Ballet IIB level.

**Uniform Ladies:** Please see Uniform statement on page 6, and black jazz shoes.

**Uniform Men:** Class dress code with black oxford jazz shoes and black jazz pants.

**Modern – Ballet IIIB or higher:** Many styles and techniques comprise modern dance. Considered an alternative dance form to classical ballet, it involves a kinetic exploration of movements that lead to a more complete dancer.

**Uniform:** Please see Uniform statement on page 6, black tights or jazz pants, bare feet

**Uniform Men:** Black Tights, white or black athletic fit T shirt, bare feet

### **Character- Ballet IIIB or higher**

**Uniform:** Please see Uniform statement on page 6, black Character shoes (Style # 550), character skirt

### **Musical Theatre- Ballet IIIB or higher**

**Uniform:** Please see Uniform statement on page 6, black Character shoes (Style # 550), character skirt

## **Performance Opportunities**

- Youth Company (YC): Typically open to dancers moving into Ballet IIB and up by audition, or at the instructor's discretion. They perform in part of the Family Series throughout the year, as well as at various festivals or community events. These students are automatically cast in *The Nutcracker* and do not have to audition. They may have more than one role or be in both casts of *The Nutcracker*, which means performing in four in-theatre performances.
  - **Uniform for Women:** White leotard with pink seamless tights (Leotard Style #207L); pink leather ballet slippers, hair in a neat bun.
  - **Uniform for Men:** White t-shirt, black tights/pants, white socks, and black leather ballet slippers, hair pulled back.

## **Upper School Division**

### **Ballet Technique Classes**

| Class Name | Required Times/Week | Class Lengths -1.5 Hours |
|------------|---------------------|--------------------------|
|------------|---------------------|--------------------------|

|                    |                                     |  |
|--------------------|-------------------------------------|--|
| <b>Ballet IIIB</b> | Five classes per Week (Recommended) |  |
|--------------------|-------------------------------------|--|

**Uniform-** Please see Uniform statement on page 6, pink seamless tights, pink leather ballet shoes, hair in a neat bun

Boys- See Men's Technique Uniform on page 6

|                  |                     |  |
|------------------|---------------------|--|
| <b>Ballet IV</b> | Five Times per Week |  |
|------------------|---------------------|--|

(Recommended)

**Uniform-** Please see Uniform statement on page 6, pink seamless tights, pink leather ballet shoes, hair in a neat bun

Boys- See Men's Technique Uniform on page 6

|                 |                                  |  |
|-----------------|----------------------------------|--|
| <b>Ballet V</b> | Six Times per Week (Recommended) |  |
|-----------------|----------------------------------|--|

**Uniform** - Please see Uniform statement on page 6, pink seamless tights, pink leather ballet shoes, hair in a neat bun

Boys- See Men's Technique Uniform on page 6

## Examinations

Our syllabus is structured with a balance of honoring the traditions of classical dance, meeting the needs of the developing child, and providing a safe space for blossoming artists to grow. An examination process establishes a clear and concise assessment of our faculty and student progress with the syllabus over the course of the academic year. Yearly evaluations/examinations are held to ensure the excellence of each teacher's class/level. Select levels participate annually in the American Ballet Theater (ABT) National Training Curriculum (NTC) examination process. Although not mandatory, we highly encourage participation.

### **Transfer Student Placement**

Depending on experience, students usually take a placement class and afterwards faculty make recommendations on their placement within the curriculum. Academy Faculty will continue to watch students' development and adjust their placement if/as needed.

## Open Division

### **Community Classes**

The goal of Community Classes is to expose adults and teens (ages 13+) to ballet as an art form, all while learning control and toning of the body. The Academy offers classes for the adult with no previous experience, as well as for the advanced adult student or past professional. Flexible enrollment options are available as adult students' lives vary in time availability and family responsibilities. Classes include: Beginning Ballet, Intermediate Ballet, Floor Barre, Pilates, Yoga, Beginning Tap, and Strength & Conditioning.

**Open Division Uniform** – Comfortable, form-fitting exercise clothing that allows full range of motion, and hair up off of your neck. This is so the teacher can address proper spinal alignment.

## Pre-Professional Program

### **Pre-Professional Levels (Pre Pro):**



These students take ballet classes 6 days a week, 4 alternative dance classes per week, and 1 academic class. Pre Pro students must attend an approved Summer Intensive study program of at least 4 weeks.

### **Pre Professional**

**Uniform:** Please see Uniform statement on page 6, pink seamless tights, leather or canvas ballet shoes, hair in a neat bun

### **Pre Professional Men**

**Uniform:** See Men's Technique Uniform on page 6

### **Pre Pro Character**

**Uniform Women:** Pre-Pro class leotard with Black Natalie elastic waist character skirt with the length to hit just below the knee; Character Shoes: Black with Cuban heel.

**Uniform Men:** White shirt, black jazz pants, black character shoes.

### **Pre Pro Jazz**

**Uniform Ladies:** Please see Uniform statement on page 6, black Capri Pant (Style #TH5521), and black jazz oxford shoes.

**Uniform Men:** Class dress code w/ black oxford jazz shoes & black jazz pants.

### **Pre Pro Modern**

**Uniform Women:** Please see Uniform statement on page 6, black Capri Pant Style #TH5521 or Natalie Capri, bare feet.

**Uniform Men:** White t-shirt, black tights, bare feet

### **Pre Pro Musical Theater**

**Uniform Women:** Please see Uniform statement on page 6, Character Shoes: Black with Cuban heel.

**Uniform Men:** Class dress code w/ black oxford jazz or character shoes & black jazz pants.

## **Performance Opportunities**

Performances serve a variety of functions in our organization. Performing is a showcase for skills, talents, and accomplishments of local artists. In Academy-related productions, performing should be a continuation of the educational process.

## End of Year Showcase

All students are eligible for participation in an end of the year Academy Showcase. **Dancers' accounts must be at a ZERO balance by May 1<sup>st</sup> in order to participate in the End of Year Performance.** This performance highlights the material learned during the year and introduces them to the performance experience. The Showcase is a voluntary experience and students are not penalized if they are unable to participate. Students participating in the Showcase must adhere to the following requirements:

- Student's account must be current. This means that their account must be at a zero balance by May 1<sup>st</sup> in order to participate in the Academy Showcase.
- Students in the Pre-Ballet Division who have more than four (4) unexcused absences are ineligible to participate in the Academy Showcase. (Make up classes will cancel out a missed class.)
- Students in Ballet IA and above who have more than two (2) unexcused absences are ineligible to participate in the Academy Showcase. This is 2 absences for their ballet level and 2 absences per alternative dance class. (Make up classes will cancel out a missed class.)
- For students participating in the Academy Showcases, all girls will wear pink tights and the color leotard appropriate for their level with a class skirt or a tutu for the performance (tutu provided by FWB costume shop), and hair in a neat ballet bun. Boys will wear their classroom dress code.

## The Nutcracker

Fort Wayne Ballet presents 15+ performances of *The Nutcracker* every season for our community. With two casts and about 170 roles (including understudies), it is a Herculean task to mount the production with professional quality. The audition date for *The Nutcracker* is on the Academy Schedule. More information will come separately about this opportunity as the time gets closer.

- **Pre-Professional Levels and Youth Company:** No audition required, automatically cast.

- **Ballet Levels IB-V:** Audition required, roles cast based on ability, technical mastery, and casting needs.
- **Roles for small children:** For those families who have children in Creative II or Ballet I: if you are interested in your child participating please watch for the informational letter to come out late August and keep the day of the audition open for your family. Casting is non-negotiable.

\* \* \*

## **Expectations & Requirements**

### **Registration**

A \$50.00 registration fee is required to register a student in the Auer Academy classes. Additional children of the same immediate family pay \$20.00 per child. As we do have a limit on class sizes, this registration fee will hold their spot in their class(es).

### **Classroom Etiquette**

Students are expected to be courteous and attentive in class. They will be asked to leave if they become too disruptive. Negative behavior is not tolerated. Faculty will partner with parents to understand and to obtain positive behavior.

### **Attendance:**

1. **LATE POLICY:** It is essential students come to class **on time**. Lack of proper warm-up at the beginning of class can cause injury. **Students more than ten (10) minutes late to class will be asked to sit and observe.** This prevents unnecessary absences. Three occurrences of being more than 10 min late will count as one (1) unexcused absence.
2. Fort Wayne Ballet cannot be responsible for the safety of students leaving the building with or without parental permission.
3. Students are encouraged to make up all classes missed. Missed classes may be made up within the current academic year.
4. **Excessive absenteeism (excused or unexcused) may lead to exclusion from performances or Youth Company at the discretion of the Artistic Director.**

### **Excused Absences:**

An excused absence is one the student does NOT need to make up in order to participate in the End of Year Showcase. Excused absences include:

1. Death of a family member.
2. Hospitalization of dancer.
3. Religious obligation.
4. Dancer has a fever, the flu, or other illness.

5. Mandatory school obligation.

### **Class Make-up Policy:**

Pre-Ballet/Ballet classes: Students can attend a different class in their level or below to make up a ballet class. **(Ex. a Ballet III student can take another Ballet III class that they are not currently signed up for, or a Ballet IIB class to make up an absence.)**

### Alternative Dance Classes:

1. Students can make up an alternative dance class by taking a lower level class in the same discipline. **(Ex. Taking Tap I to make up a Tap II absence).**
2. Students can take an extra ballet technique class to make up an alternative class. Ballet classes can always make up an alternative dance class. This needs to be a class they are not already signed up for.
3. Students in introductory alternative classes can also observe a higher level class of the same alternative class if there is no other option for their makeup.
4. Students may **NOT** take an alternative class to make up a missed ballet/pointe class.

### **Emergency Closings**

In the event of inclement weather, Auer Academy of Fort Wayne Ballet will remain open for classes if it is deemed safe for families and students to travel.

As always, we urge you to exercise prudence as you will have the better sense of the road conditions in your areas. Please email [rsparrow@fortwayneballet.org](mailto:rsparrow@fortwayneballet.org) if weather conditions will impede your child from attending class to ensure we are notified.

### **No Smoking**

The Auer Center for the Arts and Culture is a smoke-free facility.

### **Volunteer Hours**

- Fort Wayne Ballet relies heavily on volunteers to assist with productions and special events. As an academy parent, you are in a unique position to help us. You understand our needs and how your time and talents directly benefit Fort Wayne Ballet and its students.
- **We ask each Academy Family to contribute at least 10 hours of volunteer time.**
- If you are unable to commit to the 10 hours of volunteering, you may make a donation of \$50 per child.

- All volunteer opportunities will be communicated via email through sign up genius. Any questions can be sent to Christina Brinker, cbrinker@fortwayneballet.org

## Scholarships

We believe everyone should have access to quality dance. Scholarships are available on a limited basis. Please reach out to Raleigh Sparrow for more information.

### Auer Center for Arts and Culture

All children under 12 years old must be accompanied by an adult while in the Auer Center of Arts and Culture. Please keep a watchful eye as this is a public space and we share the building with other tenants. No running, yelling, etc.

For security reasons, students must not wait outside. This is a public space; please help us as we strive to ensure your child's safety. Thank you for your understanding and cooperation. The Auer Center for Arts & Culture closes at 9:00pm M-F; 6pm Saturdays.

**Students left after classes end and the Academy closes will be charged \$50.00 for every fifteen minutes for a staff member to remain in the building. Fort Wayne Ballet faculty and staff are not responsible for driving a child home and it is considered a liability issue for them to do so.**

\*\*\*

## Harassment Policy

Board Approved on December 13, 2005

In its commitment to create a safe and supportive environment, the faculty, administrators, students and their parents must practice civility, good manners, courtesy, consideration for the abilities and talents of others, and good community.

Consequently, behavior that degrades or is contrary to these aspects of learning, performance, and community has no place at Fort Wayne Ballet. The following statement is intended to identify unacceptable behavior:

Fort Wayne Ballet has **no tolerance** for any statements, behaviors or actions of a derogatory or threatening nature, weapon possession, use of profanity or obscenity, intimidation or other behaviors by any student, parent, staff person, faculty, or other individual that might pose a threat to the well-being of any person, whether such

behaviors occur on Fort Wayne Ballet grounds or in Fort Wayne Ballet's facility, or at any other place where an educational, performance, or outreach function is occurring and Fort Wayne Ballet students, parents, staff, faculty and others are present.

The policy applies to Auer Center for Arts and Culture premises before, during and after Fort Wayne Ballet hours, anytime Fort Wayne Ballet buildings or grounds are used by a Ballet group, off Ballet grounds at any Ballet function or event, when traveling to and from a Ballet activity, function or event, or at any time or place which may affect an educational, performance or outreach function or could be identified with Fort Wayne Ballet. All potential safety concerns will be investigated thoroughly with appropriate action taken, up to and including discipline, expulsion of the offending party and/or dancer of the offending party, and criminal justice intervention. This is not an area for practical jokes or offhanded comments. Events in recent years have demonstrated the importance of investigating thoroughly any potential safety concerns.

If you become aware of a threatening situation, please report it to the Academy Registrar, Artistic Director or Executive Director.

## **Conduct Constituting an Interference with Purposes of Fort Wayne Ballet**

Any conduct which causes, or which can reasonably be foreseen to cause, a substantial disruption or material interference in carrying out the purposes of Fort Wayne Ballet, Inc., will result in disciplinary action to the student. Also, any conduct which would be grounds for suspension or expulsion from an Indiana public school would be grounds for suspension or expulsion from the Auer Academy of Fort Wayne Ballet.

### **General Rules**

- Do what's right.
- Do your best.
- Treat others the way you want to be treated.

If each of us follows these three basic rules in each of our interactions throughout the school year, Fort Wayne Ballet will truly be a place where students can reach their fullest potential.