

Welcome to

EMPIRE

DANCE COMPANY

A Handbook for both Parents and Students

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WHY...

Empire Dance Company is a performance based Dance Company focusing on training students 2 years to 5 years old, with a desire to perform. Once a student has reached their potential at Wakefield we welcome them to continue their dance training at our Richmond campus where we offer tuition from 2 years and older.

We are a successful competition company having had successes both nationally and internationally. We work along side each student to mold and create work that best suits each student. We know that no two students are alike our curriculum is personalized so each student gains the most out of their learning experience.

Artistic Director Okiwi Hawkins has tackled the performing Arts Industry both here in New Zealand and Australia.

Okiwi trained under the watchful eye of JK Danceworks. Okiwi trained in all styles of dance receiving his Solo Seal Diploma and Teachers Cert with NZAMD.

Okiwi comes from a Musical Theatre Background, in the past having the opportunity to be apart of Musicals such as Rent, Cats Miss Saigon, High School Musical, Joseph, Godspell, Oliver and Music Man.

As Artistic Director Okiwi endeavors to bring years of on stage and off stage, life lessons and experience to his students. With teaching credits both in NZ and Australia, Okiwi's style is a unique and energetic style that pushes the students to explore their own personal limits.

I personally look forward to meeting you and working together to create opportunities for your children to become the stars within.

Take care, and I will see you soon

Okiwi Hawkins

Empire Dance Company

Artistic Director

Classes

Students will train in a introduction to dance styles will vary in **Jazz, hip hop & Tap**. Dancer's will not only get full dance education in technique and performance skills, but learn life lessons of commitment, responsibility taught through dance and theatre.

We have 2 age groups in our Wakefield Company.

Pre School [2-3 years], Pre School [4-5 years], ages as at 31st December and subject to ability. We aim to train and prepare every student to carry on further training at our Richmond studio after the age of 6.

To the Parents

Here at EDC we believe that children's success depends on the support of their parents or guardians. Because your commitment to the process makes an enormous difference, we encourage you to be a part of your child's dance education

Our programs rely on a positive atmosphere and educational experience for our tutors, students and their parents. Cooperation between all parents is expected. Showing respect – for other parents, the students and the other tutors – makes an important impression on your children. You are a role model for your child about how you interact with others in a professional setting.

Your child's presence at all classes is imperative. The spirit of teamwork and the lesson of dedication are a big part of our school's process.

Parents and teachers may look at a child's learning from different perspectives. However, we believe they share a common goal: to ensure that every child receives the best possible training, both physically and mentally. Mutual respect among our teachers and our Students' parents provides the children with ultimate care and education

To the Student

The first step to becoming a successful performer is making a solid commitment to your classes. Strong technique is a key ingredient and class is where you develop that technique. Come to each class prepared to learn without personal distractions. Class time is your chance to focus on yourself, so try to leave your concerns or worries at the studio door. True progress is made when you look at each class as an opportunity to become better at what you love to do. Dance full-out, stretch a little further become more aware of your technique, and make the most of every class.

Respect for the teacher is essential. Listen to each correction given, whether it's directed at you or another dancer. A correction is an honor; it shows you how much a teacher cares about your progress as a dancer. Always say thank you when a teacher offers you constructive criticism. Nothing can stop those students who apply themselves in every class and appreciate their teachers' knowledge and experience.

Special Information for Parents of Pre School

Our purpose is to provide the highest quality preschool education in a secure, nurturing, and stimulating environment. Empire Dance Company, serves the physical, emotional, and intellectual needs of the Pre school students. We meet these goals with our age-appropriate curriculum and ongoing communication with parents.

The first few weeks of classes serve as an introductory phase to help students become comfortable with the overall dance experience, the classroom, their teacher, and their classmates. Right from the beginning we focus on your child's coordination, listening skills, musical awareness, and developing imagination. We accomplish this through age-appropriate music and song, simple stretching exercises, specified dance genres basics, and games in an environment of creativity.

Pre School dance is about helping children learn to tap into their imaginations and express themselves creatively, not necessarily about

learning steps (although they are introduced to some basic steps). So don't be disappointed if your child doesn't pirouette around the house or look like a budding performer right away.

Separation From the Parent

The process of separating from the parent as the child attends dance class is an important accomplishment of preschool children.

As children mature, they begin to identify themselves as independent personalities. In separating from you, the parent, your child is learning how

- to develop an interest in the activities of the dance class
- to feel comfortable with other children in the class
- to understand that his/her parent will come back and pick him/her up
- to understand that all parents leave their children and come back for them.

It is important to know that at times young children will explore the limits of attending dance class and say they don't want to go. This period may occur anytime, but it is usually short-lived. Here are some suggestions that might help you handle the situation:

- Emphasize what the child is doing at the dance class rather than what you do while he/she is in class.
- Avoid prolonged good-byes.
- Expect the crying (we do too!) and know that usually the tears are for the parent's benefit.

It May Not Be the Right Time

If your child cries or does not want to take a class, don't panic. If parents push children and create more stress than he/she is already experiencing, the child may come to perceive dance class as a bad experience. That kind of negativity could make them apprehensive about dance for a long time, which isn't good for anyone involved. Never force your child into the classroom.

If your child stops attending class within the first month, we understand. We encourage you to have your child try again next year.

We recommend that children be encouraged to practice at home, but not

forced to do so. Repetition is one of the key elements for success with preschool dance students; the more they practice, the more confident they will feel. Practicing with your child allows you to join in the dance experience

FOR ALL PARENTS AND STUDENTS

Understanding Dance Education

As a parent, you play an important role in supporting your student financially, but your emotional support is of equal—and perhaps even greater—value. Encourage your child to be the best that he or she can be regardless of what others may achieve. Dance is an individual art form and children need to be allowed to achieve at a pace that's comfortable. No two students will progress at the same rate, even if they experience the exact same training. It's important to encourage children to focus on themselves, giving it their all, and being satisfied with their own accomplishments.

Not all children will develop into professional dancers. One of the primary goals of our faculty is to teach life lessons and skills that offer children the best chance for success. Dance education encompasses far more than technique and the steps your children learn. We believe the discipline of dance training gives young people a better understanding of commitment through learning, experiencing the spirit of teamwork, and discovering what they can accomplish through hard work. Our goal is to educate the minds, bodies, and souls of our students, teaching them the skills needed for a successful life, whether or not they stay involved in dance.

You play an important role in supporting your student financially, but your emotional support is of equal—and perhaps even greater—value.

Class Placement

Placement decisions are derived from many years of teaching experience. A child is placed in the particular group or class where we feel he or she will feel confident enough to develop self-esteem.

Some students who are placed in a higher level will become discouraged, only to lose their passion for dance. Others respond to the challenge of

being in a class with students who are more proficient by pushing themselves to work harder. Placement is highly individual and the factors that go into the decision are complex.

Classroom Observation

In-class observations take place during the parent watch week. This will happen once every term and will usually be the last week of each term. This is the chance for you to see firsthand what the classroom experience is like for your child. Please do not bring infants or other children to the in-class observation week if they will cause distraction. No in-class observation will be permitted and you will be asked to leave the studio space

Medical Information Current & Preexisting

Parents must notify the director/and or teachers regarding any current illness that can be contagious and/or caught by other dance students. A dancer may be asked not to attend classes while they are still contagious. Parents must notify the director/and or teachers regarding children who use an inhaler or who may require medications during their time at Empire Dance Company. It is also important to inform the director and/or teachers about your child's existing medical conditions or learning disabilities at the time of registration and throughout the school year. Our teachers are trained professionals who are anxious to work with all children and personalities, and the more we know about your child, the better.

Dress Code Requirements

Empire Dance Company, maintains a dress code to encourage concentration and a sense of inclusiveness (variations in attire can be distracting and contribute to feelings of inequality). Uniformity in dancewear allows the teachers to assess how well the students are implementing the technique being taught, problems with alignment, and other important aspects of dance training.

- Students should carry their dancewear, shoes, and other belongings in a dance bag. Please print your child's name on the bag as well as on all of its contents.
- Dancewear is to be kept in good repair and laundered on a regular basis.

- Watches, jewelry, and hair bows should not be worn to class.
- Female students should wear their hair tightly in a bun secured and styled away from the face.
- Students are expected to observe good personal hygiene habits. Deodorant is required for students age 10 and older.

Girls	Boys
Workout attire. Eg, Black shorts, Leotard, Crop tops etc. Jazz shoes	Workout Attire. Eg, Black shorts, Singlet, Shirt etc. Jazz shoes

Tuition and Expense Policy

We will accept cheques, or internet transfer for tuition payment. Please make all cheques out to Empire Dance Company.

We require aFULL payment to be paid by the 2nd week of the start of each new term. Any students that we have not received payment from may be asked to sit out of the class until the payment has been made. If you are having trouble paying please make contact with Anthony before the payment is due via our e-mail address.

Additional Fees

Tuition does not include the competition entries, dancewear, shoes, costumes, recital tickets, uniforms, exam entries, exam day fees or special events.

Fees

All fees are based on a normal school term.

Pre School	2 – 5 Years	\$120
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Each term is charged at a eight week term if extra weeks danced in a term these may/will be transferred for students to another term that may fall short of classes due to absence of the teacher. Classes are based on ages and ability. A company member can be moved up a level to better them.

Company members, at studio director discretion, can also be moved down a level if member is not showing sufficient amount of improvement or lack of understanding working given.

All fees include built in classes been Jazz, Ballet and Musical Theatre. These are taught at teachers discretion and ability.

Termination of Enrollment

In certain circumstances, when it is in the best interest of one or more students, it may be necessary for the school to terminate a student's enrollment. Every effort will be made to correct a problematic situation before terminating enrollment. Reasons for termination of enrollment include the following:

- Disruptive or dangerous behavior by students or their parents.
- Abuse of other children, staff, or property.
- A child's capacity to learn dance, through coordination, musical timing, and memory recall etc, where EDC will do everything to meet the child's needs. But every child has different attributes and EDC may not be the right fit.
- Harassment or Bullying, by way of damaging comments and/or abusive nature directed towards teachers, Students, Other parents or against the studio or other studios or dancers at an event such competitions.

Parent Viewing & Siblings

Please refrain from bringing other siblings into the class, we ask that parents please drop off their children and return 10 Minutes before the end of the class to collect your little dancer. **If you are new from week 3 onwards the above will apply.** Parent viewing will be enforced by tutors please understand that this decision has been made with the students best interest at heart as we feel more can be learned and obtained by having a calm and controllable environment. The First and Last week of each term you are welcome to view the full class. Please remember to remain quiet during the class when viewing.

Arrival and Departure

We encourage students to arrive 5 minutes before class starts. For their safety, children under age 10 should be picked up immediately after class.

Students are to be warmed and ready to start when class starts. Not all classes will be given warm ups at the start of class. Please factor this into your travel time.

Attendance

All students are expected to attend their regularly scheduled classes. Each class offers a step forward in the educational process. A missed class could leave a child one step behind the other students. Choreography for the recital and competitions will be taught and rehearsed. It is important for children to feel completely confident with the choreography Missing class could result in frustration for the students and their teachers and classmates. It is also to the teachers discretion that if a student may miss a certain section of choreography the student may not be re taught that section.

Tardiness

Dance is a physical activity that requires the body to be warmed up in order to execute movement safely. Students who arrive more than 10 minutes late may be asked to observe class for reasons of personal safety.

Conditions of choreography

Choreography for classes, performances and competitions remain the artistic and intellectual property of Empire Dance Company and/or the syllabus providers. Choreography must not be copied or used without prior permission of the Empire Dance Company. Students who leave the Company are not permitted to perform choreography that was developed specifically for them by Empire Dance Company teachers as a solo or as part of a team/group without prior permission.

Communication with Empire Dance Company

Under no circumstances are students or guardians allowed to communicate with our student & Contact teacher's via their personal devices or media

this includes text, phone calls and all social media which includes – facebook, instagram, snap chat messages, comments our tagging. All communication is to be made with Empire Dance Company Director and Manager which are **Okiwi Hawkins or Anthony Carter** our contact details are provided at the start of this hand book. We will only accept email, empire facebook messages or phone calls as appropriate point of communication. All other communication made using text messages or our private social media accounts which includes – facebook, instagram, snap chat messages, comments our tagging will not be excepted as appropriate communication via these devices and will be deleted and no response provided. Our only exception is when an empire director or manager creates a group chat using facebook to provide fast blast communication (This is genrally only used for our competitive parents and students) Failure to comply may result in termination of the student and guardian.

Student and Parent Use of Social Media

Use of Facebook, Twitter, LinkedIn, blogging, and other online social-media vehicles is commonplace.

This policy is intended to provide Empire Dance Company students and parents with guidelines to eliminate any confusion concerning the use of social media.

- You DO NOT have permission to reveal any information that compromises Empire Dance Company. By that, we mean you are forbidden to share personal information about the director, other students or their families, or anything that is proprietary and/or confidential to them or Empire Dance Company
- Students and parents should neither claim nor imply that they are speaking on behalf of Empire Dance Company.
- Never post anything that could compromise the self-esteem of students who attend Empire Dance Company
- If you post videos of class or rehearsals, don't post any choreography in its entirety; Empire Dance Company owns the copyright to all choreography taught at the school.
- Respect the law, including those laws governing defamation,

discrimination, harassment, and copyright and fair use. As stated in this handbook, parents and students should never post negative comments about other schools or teachers. Also, please do not post negative comments about school activities such as competitions, conventions, and performances, or about the directors of those events.

- Ensure that your social networking conduct is consistent with all of the policies contained in this handbook.

General Policies

- Classes finish and start straight away please do not interrupt the teacher's in between class change over's or you may be billed extra.
- Parents and students should never interrupt a class in session.
- Only water is allowed in the studios. No food, drinks, or gum.
- We love babies and young children and appreciate the chance to meet our students' siblings. However, our priority is the safety of every child on the school premises. Children must be supervised at all times and are not free to run around the lobby or classroom areas.
- No cell phones or computers may be used during class time. (This means no emailing, Internet use, or text messaging.) In the waiting area you are welcome to use your electronic devices.
- Students and parents are restricted from contacting teachers by phone, text messages, etc. Please contact Anthony in administration for any questions.
- Never speak negatively about teachers, students, or parents from other schools.
- All students and parents must show respect for their teachers at all times.

Inappropriate behavior will result in immediate dismissal from the school.