

Vancouver Dance Theatre Handbook



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WELCOME TO VANCOUVER DANCE THEATRE

MEMBERSHIP

Vancouver Dance Theatre is a non-profit dance company based in Clark County, WA and is “dedicated to the encouragement and appreciation of the dance arts in our local community.” Dancers between the ages of 5 and 18, and their families, are encouraged to join VDT to experience the fun and excitement of participating in the Nutcracker! VDT is not affiliated with any school district or dance studio and all dancers from the Vancouver/Portland metro area are welcome. Our hope is to supplement and enhance the many fine local programs by offering dancers a chance to perform in a variety of ways.

Requirements to audition for the Nutcracker:

1. Be a member of the Vancouver Dance Theatre : \$35 annual family membership fee.
2. Meet age requirements: must be 5 years old by August 31st (prior to auditions).
Dancers are aged 5-18 and must be school age, kindergarten - twelfth grade.
3. Have at least one year of previous ballet training.
4. Currently registered and studying with a ballet teacher. Dancer must continue weekly ballet class attendance in addition to participating in the Nutcracker rehearsals and production.

AUDITIONS

Auditions are publicized in advance via email to former dancers, information sent to local studios and dance teachers, posters displayed throughout the community, via VDT social media posts, and on our website at www.vancouverdancetheatre.com. All audition information and forms can be found on our website and registration begins September 3rd.

During the auditions, a picture will be taken of your dancer for the Artistic Director(s) to use as reference and measurements will be taken for costuming purposes. Dancers are grouped by age and experience level, perform stretches and warm ups, then dance through given moves and combinations. Some dancers may be asked to stay for the following round of auditioning. Due to quantity and varied ability, auditioning is necessary for ALL dancers.

Once casting is complete, dancers and families will be notified via email and a cast list will be posted on the VDT website. Casting is typically sorted into two casts, A and B, where each dancer is given one dance role, often two. Year after year, as dancers grow in skill and ability, they may take on more complex roles or even additional parts. Casting decisions are based on size/age, ability, experience, and safety. As the party scene requires dancers to learn multiple dances/movements throughout Act I, any dancer cast as a party girl/boy will likely only receive that one role. They will not receive a role in Act II. These decisions will be

based on the needs of the overall production and at the sole discretion of the Artistic Director each year.

It is important for each dancer to strive to do their best and accept the assigned part in the spirit of enhancing the production. Occasionally changes may be necessary after rehearsals have begun and are made at the discretion of the Artistic Director(s). In consideration of the Artistic Director's time and obligations, any questions, comments, or concerns **must be made directly to a VDT board member** instead of addressing the Artistic Director(s).

REHEARSALS

Rehearsals will be held on Saturday and Sunday afternoons, starting the first weekend following auditions. Dancers can typically expect to have one day of practice per weekend although there are times when dancers may have rehearsals on both Saturday and Sunday. Rehearsals fall between approximately 12:30–6:30pm Saturdays and approximately 1–6pm on Sundays. Rehearsals can be 15 to 90 minutes long depending on the role. By Wednesday of each week, upcoming weekend rehearsal schedules are emailed to dancers and their families and posted on our website www.vancouverdancetheatre.com.

Director(s) often hold rehearsals at least one day (sometimes both days) of the Thanksgiving weekend. Please plan accordingly if your family will be out of town this weekend and need to take it as one of your two allowable absences.

Costume fittings will be scheduled on some weekends along with rehearsals. Every attempt is made to try and coincide fittings with rehearsals to limit the number of times dancers have to return to the studio; however this is not always possible. Costumes often need more than one fitting to ensure each dancer presents their best for performances. Fitting schedules will be emailed and posted along with rehearsal schedules each week.

Dancers are fit to costumes depending on their role and availability of sizes. While being fit throughout the rehearsal season, costumes are often not in their completed state. Please encourage your dancer to display a positive and optimistic outlook regarding their assigned costume(s) and to remember that each piece is in consideration of the whole production. Our goal is to ensure that every dancer looks their best in compilation of the whole cast of dancers on the stage at any given time.

Participating in the Nutcracker is a supplemental dance activity. Dancers must be enrolled in and attend ballet classes a minimum of once a week. Older dancers en pointe must be in class a minimum of 3 days a week. This ensures that dancers are building the skill and stamina to perform in the production. Enrollment will be verified at the start of the season and again halfway through. If VDT finds a dancer has not been attending ballet classes, they may be recast or asked to leave the production.

ATTENDANCE

Dancers are expected to arrive **ten (10) minutes before** and stay for the **full length** of each scheduled rehearsal. Each season there are only nine or ten weeks of rehearsals. Each dancer can miss a total of two (2) rehearsal days including sick time or pre-scheduled absences. Any two of the following will count as a single (1) absence: arriving late to a rehearsal (tardy), leaving early from a rehearsal, or missing the rehearsal for one of their parts if they have more than one role. To maintain the integrity of the show, any dancer who has more than two absences may forfeit their right to perform and the decision is at the discretion of the VDT Board of Directors.

****Please refer to our illness policy below.**

VOLUNTEERING

Vancouver Dance Theatre is a non-profit organization and most of those involved, including the Board of Directors, are working on a volunteer basis. The only paid contractors are the Artistic Director(s), male lead dancer, and Costume Mistress.

It is **mandatory** that every dancer's family participate in at least **TWO** pre-production jobs, as well as **THREE** production jobs. Pre-production (during the rehearsal season) committees include studio attendance, ornaments, props, silent auction procurement, etc. Production (performance week) committees include dressing room chaperones, backstage help, front house sales, ticket/door, auditorium attendant, steamers, etc. Pre-production and production committee sign ups will be sent electronically via email. If a family does not sign up for the required number of jobs by the due date, the Board of Directors will assign jobs and notify the family via email.

COSTS

Mandatory:

- \$35 Annual Family Membership Fee (per household; due Audition Day)
- \$45 per dancer Production Fee (Due first rehearsal weekend)
- Fundraising (Please see Fundraising Opportunity information sheet)
 - \$150 for one dancer in family
 - \$75 for each additional dancer in family
 - -OR- \$90.00 per dancer fundraising buyout (instead of fundraising; due first rehearsal weekend)
- *Dancers are required to provide their own dance shoes, tights, and “nudies” or skin colored leotard for under costumes (for performance week)

**If you fundraise, the amount to participate is \$80.*

**If you choose the buyout instead of fundraising, the amount to participate is \$170.*

****All fees & fundraising are due no later than posted due dates for dancer(s) to participate in rehearsals and performances. All fees may be paid early if desired.**

****ALL mandatory fees are non-refundable. VDT has ongoing annual costs that we must pay, including all bills and service fees. Mandatory fees cover these costs even if the season or performance is canceled and we're unable to remain open for unforeseen circumstances.**

VDT will only accept cash and check at the studio. If you want to use a credit card, you may do so via our CheddarUp links found on the VDT website.

Optional

- Nutcracker apparel
- Ornaments: Will be available for paid pre-order for two weeks after casting

COMMUNICATIONS

Everyone is expected to read all information provided including this handbook, fundraising materials, and weekly emails. It is advised that families print out this handbook and VDT calendar for reference throughout the season. Every dancer and their guardians are responsible for the information provided here. If you have a question, please refer to this handbook or our website www.vancouverdancetheatre.com prior to emailing VDT; often the answers to questions are found here or online. If you cannot find the answer, please email VDT using one of the emails provided below.

VDT Board members send families weekly emails regarding casting decisions, weekly rehearsal and costume fitting schedules, pre and production jobs and committees, fundraising and fee due dates and so much more. Please ensure VDT has the correct email for any family member and dancer who needs or wants to receive our weekly notifications. **It is imperative you read each and every email sent from VDT.** Below is a list of safe VDT emails you may receive communications from or reach out to. If you receive an online communication from any email not listed below, we advise you do not open it and notify VDT right away. Please add VDT emails to your safe list or check your junk email file often to ensure you are not missing important information.

Safe VDT Emails:

vancouverdancetheatre@gmail.com
vdt.treasurer@gmail.com
vdt.props@gmail.com

General questions & scheduling
Financial obligations
Backstage/Props Committee

vdt.vicepresident@gmail.com
vdt.secretary@gmail.com
vdt.silentauction@gmail.com

Ornaments & Pre/Production Signups
Publicity
Silent Auction

SHOW WEEK

Dates

Dress Rehearsals: Wednesday, December 4 (late afternoon & evening) and Thursday, December 5 (late afternoon & evening)

Performances: Friday, December 6 (evening), Saturday, December 7 (afternoon and evening), Sunday, December 8 (afternoon)

Tickets

We use an online ticketing system for ticket sales. More information will be available in October. We ask that you buy tickets for any show that you are planning to be in the audience for. The performance is our product and the way we raise money to replenish costumes, sets, and rent the space for performances.

Costumes

All costumes are provided by and are the property of Vancouver Dance Theatre. Dancers are responsible for their own practice clothes, tights, ballet slippers, pointe shoes, and “nudies”. Under the direction of a Costume Mistress, costumes are made and maintained by Board and parent volunteers.

Dress Rehearsals

Dress rehearsals take place on the Wednesday and Thursday prior to performances and are held at Fort Vancouver High School. Dress rehearsals are mandatory. Younger dancers may be required to stay late for some rehearsals, so consider letting your child’s teacher know what is happening. Dress rehearsal schedules will be emailed like all other weekly schedules. Dancers are expected to arrive on time with **FULL hair and makeup completed** just as they would for performances.

There will be an area set aside for eating, as no food or drink is allowed in the dressing rooms at any time.

Pictures/Videos

Performances will be videotaped of both Casts A and B. Parents will receive a link to the videos in January. The cost of this is included in the membership fee. Parents may take pictures of the performance during the dress rehearsals. A professional photographer will

possibly be onsite to take candid photos during dress rehearsals. These will be shared out with families in January and are also included in the membership fee.

As part of VDT, it is understood that photographs and/or video recordings may be taken by designated personnel during rehearsals and performances that may include you or your child(ren). Those photographs/videos may be used for promotional purposes and posted on our VDT website or social media accounts.

Cast Party

A cast party for all dancers and volunteers that are working one or both of the Saturday shows is usually held in the school's cafeteria between the Saturday performances.

****While at this time we do not anticipate any changes at this time, VDT does not know what, if any, restrictions may be in place during performance week in regards to eating, social distancing, and masks while at our venue (typically Fort Vancouver High School). These requirements and restrictions have the potential to affect every aspect of our show week including all items mentioned above. As we approach performance week VDT, will update all members with the most current requirements and restrictions from Vancouver Public Schools. For other Covid related information please refer to our policy on the last page of this handbook.**

Dancer Performance Expectations

- Dancers must be on time for all performances, with **hair done and make-up applied.**
- Dancers are expected to listen and follow all directions given by room parents and backstage directors.
- Bring books or games for quiet activities in the dressing room.
- Dressing rooms must be kept clean. Dancers are not permitted to touch any classroom items.
- Dancers are not allowed to eat or drink in costumes, but may bring water bottles.
- No food or drink is allowed in the auditorium or dressing rooms.
- Dancers must stay in the dressing rooms during performances.
- Only dancers and assigned parent volunteers are allowed in dressing rooms and backstage.
- Wear shirts and sweaters that button or zip to keep hair and make-up neat.

VANCOUVER DANCE THEATRE CODE OF CONDUCT FOR DANCER & PARENT/GUARDIANS

- Dancers choose to participate with VDT to learn and perform to the best of their abilities.
- Dancers will be on time to participate fully in rehearsals and performances.
- Dancers must continue to attend regular technique classes in addition to VDT rehearsals.
- Dancers will wear appropriate attire (leotard, tights, and shoes).
- Dancers will not chew gum or eat food while in rehearsal or performance spaces.
- Dancers will not use cell phones (calls, texts, emails, or games) while in rehearsal.
- Dancers will utilize proper etiquette and refrain from unnecessary behavior in the studio.
- Dancers will practice and be held responsible for memorization of their choreography.
- Dancers will be dropped off and picked up on time. There is limited supervision for dancers that are not in rehearsals. Dancers should be at the studio **10 minutes before** rehearsals begin.
- Dancers are responsible for taking care of costumes. If damaged, replacement charges will be billed.
- Parents/Guardians will maintain a positive attitude and give uplifting feedback to dancers.
- Parents/Guardians will be polite and courteous to all VDT members and Board.
- Parents/Guardians will read handouts and emails regularly to stay informed, and respond within 48 hours.
- Parents/Guardians will attend all required meetings.
- **All fees & fundraising are due no later than posted due dates for dancer(s) to participate in rehearsals and performances. All mandatory fees are non-refundable.**
- In order to audition for the next production, all members (dancers and family members) must remain in good standing including behavior, communication, and financial obligations.

SUPPORTING VDT

There are a multitude of ways to help support VDT during our season, as well as year round. Please consider helping in any way you can! Fundraising and publicity are critical to our success. While a publicity team is handling the press and other advertising, we need everyone's support in spreading the word. Here are some ideas for ways dancers and their families may help:

- Wear your VDT and Nutcracker apparel with pride. Tell everyone that you are a member of the Vancouver Dance Theatre. Invite fellow dancers to join VDT!
- Put performance posters up at your school, a parent's workplace, or in the window of a business in your community. Posters will be available at rehearsals.
- Invite your grandparents, aunts, uncles, cousins, and all your friends, neighbors, and teachers to watch you dance.
- Find and follow us on social media. Feel free to share our posts and announcements on your own social media accounts.
 - Facebook @vancouverdancetheatre
 - Instagram vancouverdancetheatre
- Select VDT as your non-profit of choice on your Fred Meyer account; please note Fred Meyer needs to be updated annually. Community partner donations help greatly with off-season expenses. Please see insert for more details.

CHECKLIST OF EXPECTATIONS

- Read & print out Handbook BEFORE Auditions (Due before 9/21)
- Fill out Audition Form online BEFORE Auditions (Due between 9/1-9/21)
- Read & sign waiver online BEFORE Auditions (Due between 9/1-9/21)
- Sign Conduct & Handbook Agreement online BEFORE Auditions (Due 9/1-9/21)
- Pay Membership fee online or by check or cash in studio (Due 9/21 at Auditions)
- Print out or incorporate VDT Calendar into your planner/phone calendar
- Read VDT emails and schedules WEEKLY
- Sign up for pre-production and production jobs
- Purchase shoes, tights, leotards, nudies for season/performance if needed
- Pay Production fee (Due rehearsal weekend 9/28-29)
- Pay Fundraising Buyout *if NOT fundraising (Due rehearsal weekend 9/28-29)
- Order & Pay for Ornaments (Due between 9/28 - 10/13)
- All fundraising completed (Due rehearsal weekend 11/9-10)

ILLNESS POLICY

Vancouver Dance Theatre's goal is to keep our dancers, families, volunteers, patrons, and our community as a whole, safe and healthy. We at VDT are taking into consideration information from the Washington State health department, hospitals, and local public schools in forming our illness policy. We will not necessarily follow individual dance studio rules. We understand and respect all aspects and views knowing they vary greatly, even within our own community. We reserve the right to modify our policy at any time.

Dancers who present with symptoms of illness are encouraged to stay home and rest. Dancers **should not attend rehearsal** if they have had a fever, vomiting or diarrhea within 24 hours of rehearsal. If a dancer presents with cold or flu symptoms, they should stay home and rest for the at least the first several days of symptom onset. They may return once symptoms begin to improve.

The Washington Department of Health states that possible symptoms of Covid may include: cough, fever, chills, headache, sore throat, runny or stuffy nose, sneezing, chest discomfort, decrease in appetite, vomiting, diarrhea, fatigue (tiredness), muscle or body aches, new loss of taste or smell, weakness, and wheezing. They recommend to stay home and away from others, get tested if accessible, and get treatment if you are eligible.

VDT will strive to provide recorded rehearsals to dancers who are unable to attend rehearsals related to illness, so they don't fall behind. Please follow Washington State guidelines for exposures, quarantine periods, testing, and returning to normal activities. Please contact VDT immediately if your dancer is sick, so accommodations can be made. An absence due to illness will not count against a dancer if proper communication is made with VDT. We want to encourage those experiencing flu, cold, Covid and other illnesses to stay home and not expose those at the rehearsal studio.

In addition, only currently scheduled dancers, volunteers, and Board members may be in the lobby of the studio. Parents, siblings, or dancers who are not scheduled for a rehearsal or costume fitting should not be in the studio. A volunteer will be in the studio to help the littles, and families are invited to watch through the large outdoor window. During auditions, a family member will be allowed into a designated part of the studio to make payments if needed and attend a parent meeting. This helps keep the studio space open for dancers and to reduce cold and illness exposure.

VDT does not have control over public school mandates including Vancouver Public Schools or any other public school district (including Fort Vancouver High School). Patrons of our performance as well as the entire VDT community MUST comply with the VPS or venue regulations during show week. VDT will **NOT** tolerate threats, debates, or volatile comments in regards to our illness policy. VDT is trying to do all we can to ensure we are able to have a safe, healthy Nutcracker season and ask our members to join us in our effort!