

Vancouver Dance Theatre Handbook



Table of Contents

Membership	1
Auditions	1
Rehearsals	2
Attendance	2
Volunteering	2
Cost	3
Communications	4
Show Week	5
-Dates	
-Tickets	
-Costumes	
-Dress Rehearsals	
-Pictures/Videos	
Show Week continued	6
-Cast Party	
-Dancer Performance Expectations	
VDT Code of Conduct for Dancers & Parent/Guardians	7
Supporting VDT	8
Checklist of Expectations	8
Covid-19 Policy	9

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 : \$20 annual family membership fee.
2. Meet age requirement: must be 5 years old by August 31st prior to auditions.
3. Have at least one year of previous ballet training.
4. Currently studying with a ballet teacher.

AUDITIONS

Auditions are publicized in advance via email to former dancers, information sent to local studios and dance teachers, posters displayed throughout the community, in 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 1st.

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 at least one 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. 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. Usually dancers can 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. Each week by Wednesday, 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 which is the last weekend before performance week.

Costume fittings will be scheduled on some weekends along with rehearsals. Every attempt is made to try and coincide rehearsals with fittings 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.

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 Covid policy below to address exposures, positive tests, and what to do if your dancer or a household family member experiences signs or symptoms of Covid.**

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, ticket/door, auditorium attendant, 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 then notify the family via email.

COSTS

Mandatory:

- \$20 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 \$65.*

**If you choose the buyout instead of fundraising the amount to participate is \$155.*

****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 must pay all our bills and service fees throughout the entire year even if the season or performance is canceled and cannot remain open if refunds were issued or carried over to the following year.**

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

Optional

- Nutcracker apparel
- DVD of performances
- Photographs
- 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 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 fittings, 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
vdt.showprograms@gmail.com
vdt.vicepresident@gmail.com
vdt.secretary@gmail.com
vdt.silentauction@gmail.com

General questions & scheduling
Financial obligations
Backstage/Props Committee
Program Ads
Ornaments & Pre/Production Signups
Publicity
Silent Auction

SHOW WEEK

Dates

Dress Rehearsals: Wednesday November 29(late afternoon & evening) & Thursday November 30th (late afternoon & evening)

Performances: Friday December 1 (evening), Saturday December 2 (afternoon and evening), Sunday December 3 (afternoon)

Tickets

This year we will continue to use an online ticket system. 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 be 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 and orders may be placed prior to the performance.. 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. Purchase is optional.

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. A sign up will be posted in November for items that are needed for the cast party. We ask each family to consider bringing one item to the cast party.

****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 cannot play or touch 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 all of us can 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 Meyers 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 9/16)
- Fill out Audition Form online BEFORE Auditions (Due between 9/1-9/16)
- Read & sign waiver online BEFORE Auditions (Due between 9/1-9/16)
- Sign Conduct & Handbook Agreement online BEFORE Auditions (Due 9/1-9/16)
- Pay Membership fee online or by check or cash at studio (Due 9/16 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 9/23-24)
- Pay Fundraising Buyout *if NOT fundraising (Due rehearsal weekend 9/23-24)
- Order & Pay for Ornaments (Due between 9/23 - 10/8)
- All fundraising completed (Due rehearsal weekend 11/4-5)

COVID POLICY

The entire world has faced this pandemic on many levels and everyone's experiences greatly differ. Vancouver Dance Theatre's goal is to keep our dancers, their families, our volunteers, patrons, and our community as a whole, safe and healthy any way we can. We here at VDT are taking into consideration information from the CDC, Washington State leadership, community hospitals, and local public schools in forming our covid 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.

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 will not be permitted 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 single family member will be allowed into a designated part of the studio to make payments if needed and attend a parent meeting.

As we have all been dealing with Covid for quite a few years now, we are also all well aware of the signs and symptoms of Covid-19. If a dancer, family volunteer, or someone within the same household is diagnosed positive with Covid, regardless of their vaccination status, VDT asks for all household members to stay home and not come to the rehearsal studio. VDT will be providing recorded rehearsals or something similar to dancers who are unable to attend rehearsals related to Covid-19 so they don't fall behind. Please follow Vancouver Public Schools and Washington state guidelines for exposures, quarantine periods, testing, and returning to normal activities. Please contact VDT immediately upon exposure or suspected infection with Covid-19 so accommodations and a plan can be made. A positive Covid test absence will not count against a dancer if proper communication is made with VDT. We want to encourage those who are exposed, suspected to have, or do have Covid to stay home and not expose those at the rehearsal studio.

If a dancer has one (1) Class A symptom or (2) Class B symptoms for any duration, please keep them home. If a dancer has one (1) Class B symptom for less than 24 hours they may come to class.

Class A: Fever (defined as subjective or 100.4°F or higher), Chills, Cough, Loss of sense of taste/smell, shortness of breath

Class B: Fatigue, Headache, Muscle/body aches, Sore throat, Congestion or runny nose, Nausea or vomiting, Diarrhea

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 provide dancers' families updated information in regards to the performance regulations as we get closer to show week. If your family is unable to comply with this policy, please consider returning to VDT another year. VDT will NOT tolerate threats, debates, or volatile comments in regards to our covid policy. VDT is trying to do all we can to ensure we are able to have a safe Nutcracker season and ask our members to join us in our effort!