

AMERICAN MIDWEST *Ballet* SCHOOL



STUDENT HANDBOOK

HOFF FAMILY ARTS & CULTURE CENTER

1001 S 6th Street
Council Bluffs, IA 51501
(712) 890-5591
school@amballet.org
amballet.org/school/

Welcome	2
Code of Conduct.....	3
Registration & Payment Policies	4
Costumes.....	5
Attendance, Weather, & Makeup Classes.....	5
Procedures.....	6
Dress Code.....	7-8
Performances & Programs	9-11
Private Lessons	11
Scholarships.....	11

WELCOME TO AMERICAN MIDWEST BALLET (AMB) SCHOOL!

The mission of American Midwest Ballet School (AMB School) is to foster a love of dance for students of all ages through exceptional training and performance opportunities. AMB School offers classes for children, teens, and adults of all skill levels through two specially designed divisions: a **Community Division** with a wide selection of dance classes for all ages in a fun and nurturing environment, and an **Academy Division** which provides a structured curriculum for aspiring dancers committed to achieving a high level of technical skill.

The School's knowledgeable and experienced faculty consists of many current and former professional dancers. Numerous performance opportunities are available through both divisions of the School, as well as the unique opportunity to perform alongside our professional dancers in American Midwest Ballet's *The Nutcracker* and other productions. During the summer months, students can further their dance studies through AMB School's **Summer Intensive** and **Summer Dance Series**.



At AMB, we live our commitment that dance is for everyone. We believe that as the region's professional dance, education, and cultural institution, we are stronger when we foster a diverse and inclusive community in our staff and leadership, on our stage, in our studios, and in our audiences. Toward this goal, we engage and value people of all ages, abilities, races, ethnicities, religions, sexual orientations, gender identities, socio-economic levels, and languages. We know that dance has the power to inspire, connect, and uplift us, and we've dedicated ourselves to listening, reflecting, and working to ensure that people from all walks of life feel included and welcome, for the vitality of our art and community.



This handbook is intended to guide you through AMB School's policies, rules, and regulations. Each registered student and/or parent/caregiver must read the handbook carefully and thoroughly to understand the expectations and procedures of AMB School. We truly celebrate each individual's journey through our school and welcome you to AMB School!

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads 'Susan Chowning'.

Susan Chowning
School Director
school@amballet.org

CODE OF CONDUCT

STUDENT CODE OF CONDUCT

BE RESPONSIBLE

Maintain clean spaces by keeping food and drink in the designated area (3rd floor lobby), disposing of leftover items immediately, and securing personal property. We ask that students put their names in shoes and dancewear to help identify any missing items.

ACTIVE LEARNING

Remain disciplined and focused on daily dance work and be open and receptive to instructor feedback.

RESPECT OTHERS

Contribute to our positive and supportive learning environment by displaying kind and courteous behavior to others. Be mindful of different viewpoints, cultures, and lifestyles.

KEEP SAFE

Follow all arrival and dismissal procedures.

It is the policy of AMB School to maintain a positive, healthy, and productive learning and working environment for all students, families, faculty, and staff. As part of their training, AMB School students are expected to behave in a responsible and disciplined manner and adhere to the School's Code of Conduct, both inside the AMB School facility and outside in the greater community as representatives of AMB School.

We ask that families accept the following responsibilities:

Support your child in his or her efforts in attending AMB School by ensuring punctual transportation, maintaining regular attendance, supporting classroom methodology, and respecting the relationship between your child and his/her instructor.

Monitor email communication, calendars, and schedules regularly.

Update any account by using your online client portal, emailing school@amballet.org, or visiting the front desk.

Understand that teachers may need to physically help your child with body placement/position. This is always done in a caring and professional manner. If a student is not comfortable with physical contact from an instructor, they should make it known to the teacher.

Respect the professional judgement of the AMB School faculty regarding your child's progress in their program. Every child develops differently both physically and cognitively. The decision to retain or advance a student is made with careful consideration keeping the child's best interest in mind.

Bring any problems or potential issues to the AMB School's attention in a timely fashion to ensure all students' needs are being met and addressed. Please email school@amballet.org or visit the front desk to set up an appointment.

Be sure your child is aware of all AMB School policies and the behavior that is expected of him/her while creating a supportive environment in the school and classroom. Help ensure that your child follows the correct dress code and participates in scheduled events.

AMB School does not tolerate any of the following behaviors:

- Any form of bullying and any similar actions that occur within the student body
- Any form of violence, harassment or discriminatory remarks

AMB School reserves the right to suspend or dismiss any student whose conduct is found to be unsatisfactory.

REGISTRATION & PAYMENT POLICIES

- Visit amballet.org/school/ to register online for classes. Classes run September through May on a first come, first served basis. Class sizes are limited. A waiting list will be started if a class fills. Classes not meeting minimum enrollment may be cancelled or rescheduled.
- **Monthly tuition is due in advance on the first day of the month.** AMB School does not send invoices. Dancers having two (2) or more months of outstanding tuition will not be permitted to take class.
- **Tuition and Showcase Fees are non-refundable at any time.** If a dancer moves more than 50 miles away from the school, or if the dancer is stricken with a major injury or illness, tuition may be refunded if AMB School is presented with a current lease or utility bill showing name and address and/or a signed doctor's note respectively.
- **All credits and/or overpayments expire on the last day** of the regular school year.
- **Tuition and late fees will be charged until an official drop notice is received** from the dancer.
- Classes may be added at any time with prorated tuition; however; **classes may only be dropped at the end of the month.** No tuition will be refunded for classes dropped in the middle of a month.
- **All tuition and fees, including Showcase Fees, must be paid in full** in order for dancers to participate in the Showcase performances.
- **It is AMB School policy to protect the information of our minor students.** Registration information and notifications from the School are only shared with the registering parent or guardian. If you wish for another adult who is not included on the registration form to receive information from the School, please complete a Release of Information Form.

AMB SCHOOL FEES	
Registration Fee – one-time, charged at time of registration	Single Student: \$20 Family: \$30
Non-Autopay Credit Card Payments – debit card, check, or cash payments will not accrue the 4% charge	4%
Processing Fee – one-time, charged for non-autopay accounts only	\$30
Late Fee – charged after the 7th day of the month, recurring monthly until tuition is paid in full (regardless of absence)	\$15
Insufficient Funds Fee – applied for all returned checks or notices of insufficient funds	\$35
Decline Fee – charged after 5 unsuccessful autopay attempts (attempts made once per day)	\$15
Schedule Change Fee – charged per occurrence; 1 free schedule change is allotted per student per school year; not applicable during September or the first month in which a new student has joined the school	\$5
Showcase Fees – nonrefundable for any reason; All tuition, fees and Showcase Fees must be paid in full in order for dancers to participate in the Showcase performances	Single Student: \$50 2 Students: \$75 3+ Students: \$100
Late Pick Up Fee – charged for students taking the last class of the day/evening who are not picked up within 15 minutes of the end of class	\$15

COSTUMES

- **Students are responsible for all costume fees.** Costumes will be ordered for students who participate in the Community Student Showcase and the Academy Student Showcase.
- **Costume balances *must be paid in full* before AMB School will place the costume order.** Costume balances of \$200 or more can be split into 3 payments upon signing the Costume Payment Plan Agreement available at the front desk.
- **Costume fees are not refundable** for any reason.
- It is your responsibility to **try on your costume(s) immediately** upon receipt. If there is any discrepancy in sizing, you must report back to AMB School within 7 days of receipt of your costume. After 7 days, the cost of reordering a costume and its applicable shipping fees will be the student's responsibility.

ATTENDANCE, WEATHER, & MAKE-UP CLASSES

ATTENDANCE

- Attendance is important for students to progress in technical skills. As a courtesy, we ask that you call or email regarding a dancer's absence.
- All students are expected to arrive to class on time in the proper dress code (see pages 7-8).
- Students entering a studio late for any reason must ask permission from the teacher to join class. If a student has missed too much of the beginning warmups, they may be asked to sit and observe the class, as to prevent injury. This will be left up to the teacher's discretion. Please do not bring your dancer with illnesses that can be passed along to others in the classroom.
- Refunds or prorated tuition will not be granted for missed classes.

MAKE-UP CLASSES

- Make-up classes for the same level or one level below are offered as a courtesy to registered students with monthly accounts. If a student drops a class, any make-up classes accrued through absences in that class will be cancelled. You must remain enrolled and be actively paying tuition in order to redeem make-up classes.
- Make-up classes are not offered for weather cancellations, AMB School closings/vacations, and or AMB Company events such as *The Nutcracker*.
- On the day of a student's make-up class, they must sign in at the front desk for the make-up class.
- Make-up classes must be redeemed before the last day of classes for each calendar school year.
- AMB School reserves the right to change the class schedule or faculty as necessary, including cancelling a class that does meet the minimum enrollment number

WEATHER

- In the event of inclement weather, AMB School will follow OPS school closings. Check the AMB School Facebook page or call (712) 890-5591. There are no refunds or credits given, nor will classes be rescheduled, for weather related school closings. It is up to a parent/caregiver to use care, caution, and judgment in making decisions about travel from your area.

PROCEDURES

STUDENT AREA	2nd Floor	3rd Floor
Reception Desk - Check in/out, questions, payments, etc.	Staffed by AMB School	Not staffed by AMB School
Waiting Area/Lobby - Family and friends may wait in this area **	Includes lost and found bin * No food or drink permitted	Food and drink permitted
Dressing Area – Use public restrooms (not company dressing rooms)	Follow “Dance Corridor” hallway to the door; turn left. Restrooms are on the left.	Located behind the reception desk
Studios ***	Studios 1 and 2	Studio 3

* AMB is not responsible for lost or stolen items.

** Families are allowed to watch in the studios during the designated Observation Weeks.

*** Students must have instructor permission to leave the classroom. A signed and dated written note is required of any student leaving AMB School premises without being accompanied by a parent/caregiver.

ARRIVAL

- Students must be ready to dance at the start of his/her class. Plan a few extra minutes for changing and other preparations and be ready to enter the classroom on time.
- Students are not to be dropped off more than 30 minutes before class. In this instance, as well as during breaks between classes, AMB is not responsible for the supervision of the student. This is the parent/caregiver’s responsibility.
- Families who are registered with AMB School will be given an access code to the main doors. Please do not share, except with parents, caregivers, or others providing student transportation. If unable to access the building, please call (712) 890-5591.
- **Everyone must sign in at the 2nd floor front desk** so that staff is aware you are in the building.
- Students must wait for a teacher to take them to class. Students taking class in studios 1 or 2 will wait in the 2nd floor lobby. Students taking class in studio 3 will wait in the 3rd floor cubby/dressing area. No student is to proceed to a studio without a teacher. This is to ensure that students get to the studios efficiently and safely.

DEPARTURE

- After class(es), teachers will take students to the 2nd or 3rd floor ballet lobby.
- **Everyone must sign out prior to leaving the building** so that staff is aware you have exited the building.
- Students must wear street clothes over dance clothes when outside. Ballet shoes are not to be worn outside.
- Students must be picked up on time. Students taking the last class of the day/evening who are not picked up within 15 minutes of the end of class may be charged a \$35 late fee. Students may use the phone at the front desk.
- **Students ages 3-11 years:** Parents/caregivers must go to the 2nd floor lobby to sign out their student(s) on the provided “Sign In/ Out” list at the front desk.
- **Students ages 12-16 years:**
 - *Option 1:* Parent/caregiver signs out student at front desk.
 - *Option 2:* Student shows AMB front desk staff a text message from parent/caregiver that they are parked outside of the building.
 - *Option 3:* Parent/caregiver calls the front desk to let AMB staff know they are outside of building waiting for pick up.
- **Students with a valid driver’s license** may sign themselves out of the building. They should walk with a friend to their cars. (Sign in/sign out procedures do not pertain to adult students).

DRESS CODE

Students must arrive to class in the proper dress code and appropriate hair for their class level.

COMMUNITY DIVISION DRESS CODE

CLASS	DANCEWEAR	TIGHTS	SHOES	HAIR
Creative Movement Children's Pre-Dance	Pink Leotard <i>Bloch-Kid's Microlux Tank</i>	Pink or Skin Tone	Ballet (match tights) Children's Pre-Dance: Ballet /Black Tap	Pulled Back Out of Face
Children and Open: 1-3 Ballet	Black Leotard <i>Bloch-Kid's Microlux Tank</i>	Pink or Skin Tone	Ballet (match tights)	Bun
Children and Open: 1-3 Tap	Black Leotard or AMB Tank	Black Shorts or Black Leggings or Skin Tone Tights	Black Tap	Bun or Low Ponytail
Children and Open: 1-3 Jazz	Black Leotard or AMB Tank	Black Shorts or Black Leggings or Skin Tone Tights	Jazz- Bloch "Pulse" or similar (match tights)	Bun or Low Ponytail
Open Lyrical	Black Leotard or AMB Tank	Black Shorts or Black Leggings or Skin Tone Tights	Jazz- Bloch "Pulse" or similar (match tights)	Bun or Low Ponytail
Teen Ballet	Black Leotard	Pink or Skin Tone	Ballet (match tights)	Bun
Teen Jazz/Lyrical	Black Leotard or AMB Tank	Black Shorts or Black Leggings or Skin Tone Tights	Jazz- Bloch "Pulse" or similar (match tights)	Bun or Low Ponytail
Teen Contemporary	Black Leotard or AMB Tank	Black Shorts or Black Leggings or Skin Tone Tights	Barefoot	Bun or Low Ponytail
Teen/Adult Hip Hop	Black Leotard or AMB Tank	Black Shorts or Black Leggings or Skin Tone Tights	Clean Sneakers	Bun or Low Ponytail
Boys	White T-Shirt	Black Shorts or Tights	Ballet: Black Jazz: Black Bloch "Pulse"	Pulled Back Out of Face
Teen/Adult Tap	Black Leotard or AMB Tank Adults: Athletic Wear	Black Shorts or Black Leggings or Skin Tone Tights	Black Tap Oxford	Bun or Low Ponytail
Adult Ballet	Athletic Wear	N/A	Ballet	Pulled Back Out of Face
Adult Contemporary	Athletic Wear	N/A	Ballet or Barefoot	Pulled Back Out of Face
Teen/Adult Hip Hop	Athletic Wear	N/A	Clean Sneakers	Pulled Back Out of Face

ACADEMY DIVISION DRESS CODE

CLASS	DANCEWEAR	TIGHTS	SHOES	HAIR
Lower Academy: Ballet	Black Leotard <i>Bloch-Kid's Microlux Tank</i>	Pink or Skin Tone	Ballet (match tights)	Bun
Lower Academy: Jazz	Black Leotard <i>Bloch-Kid's Microlux Tank</i> with AMB Tank	Black Shorts or Black Leggings with Pink or Skin Tone Tights	Jazz- Bloch "Pulse" or similar (match tights)	Bun
Lower Academy: Modern/Contemporary	Black Leotard <i>Bloch-Kid's Microlux Tank</i> with AMB Tank	Black Shorts or Black Leggings with Pink or Skin Tone Tights	Barefoot	Bun
Lower Academy: Pointe	Black Leotard <i>Bloch-Kid's Microlux Tank</i>	Pink or Skin Tone	Pointe (match tights)	Bun
Upper Academy: Ballet	Black Leotard	Pink or Skin Tone	Ballet (match tights)	Bun
Upper Academy: Pointe Variations, Pas De Deux	Black Leotard Ballet skirt: optional	Pink or Skin Tone	Pointe (match tights)	Bun
Upper Academy: Jazz	Black Leotard with AMB Tank	Black Shorts or Black Leggings with Pink or Skin Tone Tights	Jazz- Bloch "Pulse" or similar (match tights)	Bun
Upper Academy: Modern/Contemporary	Black Leotard with AMB Tank	Black Shorts or Black Leggings with Pink or Skin Tone Tights	Barefoot	Bun
Boys	White T-Shirt	Black Shorts or Tights	Ballet: Black Jazz: Black Bloch "Pulse"	Pulled Back Out of Face

Brand/Style for items referenced above:

Leotard: Bloch "Microlux" Tank, Style# CL5605 or L5605

Tights: Body Wrappers, available in theatrical pink and skin tone shades

Black Shorts: Capezio "High Waisted Short" - Children: Style# TB131C / Teen: Style# TB131

Black Leggings: Capezio "Active Leggings" - Children: Style# TB204C / Teen: Style# TB204W

Junior Company, Dance for Media Arts, Ensemble, and Solo Program dancers may wear any leotard in a solid color.

Want to share your talents?

AMB School could use volunteers for various activities and events.

For more information, please contact school@amballet.org.

PERFORMANCES & PROGRAMS

HOLIDAY SHOWCASE

The **Holiday Showcase** is an annual performance for children in AMB School's Community Division. The show involves the Primary Class levels of Creative Movement, Children's Pre-Dance, and the Children's Class levels 1, 2, and 3. Dancers perform holiday classics for family and friends, and the program includes treats and special guests. There are no costumes or fees for this festive event.

AMERICAN MIDWEST BALLET'S *THE NUTCRACKER*

Auditions are open each season to all interested AMB School dance students for the company's annual production of **The Nutcracker**. Students cast will have the unique chance to perform onstage alongside the professional dancers for thousands of audience members. AMB School students are highly encouraged to audition for this exceptional opportunity! Visit amballet.org for more details.

STUDENT SHOWCASE

The Community Division and the Academy Division will each present a performance at the conclusion of the school year to highlight the growth and skills of our students. The **Community Student Showcase** will feature students in the levels of Creative Movement through Teen. The **Academy Student Showcase** will feature students in the Lower and Upper Academy.

STUDENT SHOWCASE FEES	
Single Student	\$50
2 Students (in the same family)	\$75
3+ Students (in the same family)	\$100
Costumes	Averages between \$60-\$90 per costume
Tickets	Primary & Children's Classes: \$6 Teen & Academy Classes: \$11

JUNIOR COMPANY

AMB School's **Junior Company** is a prestigious pre-professional company for advanced ballet dancers. These highly motivated students gain exposure to professional ballet company life, with opportunities to study with artistic staff, learn company repertoire, shadow professional dancers, and improve technique and artistry. Dancers are selected through auditions conducted by AMB artistic staff each year.

The Junior Company season runs August – December and March – May with rehearsals Fridays and/or Saturdays and company classes with professional dancers on Saturdays. Dancers rehearse for the annual Junior Company Showcase performance as well as roles in AMB's professional productions. Dancers must be enrolled in the full Level 5 or 6 program of the Academy Division in order to be eligible for Junior Company.

Annual tuition of \$1,000 may be paid as part of your AMB School tuition in 9 monthly installments (\$112 in September, \$111/month during October-May). To learn more, visit amballet.org/school/. For questions about Junior Company, please contact matthew@amballet.org.

ENSEMBLE

AMB School's **Ensemble** is a student performance group presenting dances in a range of styles. Students perform locally at locations around the community, participate in an out of town trip to take classes and perform, and present the Ensemble Showcase each spring. The Ensemble season runs August – May and is divided into two age groups:

- **Ensemble:** Ages 12+
- **Youth Ensemble:** Ages 9-11

Dancers are selected through auditions conducted by AMB's artistic staff. Annual tuition of \$560 may be paid in 10 monthly installments of \$56 (August-May). A \$200 participation fee is due August 1. Participants are responsible for all costume fees and instructor travel expenses. To learn more, visit amballet.org/school/. For questions about Ensemble, please contact school@amballet.org.

DANCE FOR MEDIA ARTS

This highly-focused program will help students build on their artistic skills to take advantage of the many innovative ways that dance can reach its audience today. Dance for media arts [DMA] is an alternate career option that applies the dancer's artistry to outlets such as films, television, online video, advertising, and social media content.

Dancers in the DMA program will learn and practice types of choreography widely used in media arts productions. These sessions often will be recorded and analyzed on the spot, so dancers can hone their ability to present themselves strongly on camera. Dancers also will participate in focus sessions presented by industry representatives such as talent agents, consultants, and successful professionals to learn about key elements of success in the DMA field. For more information, please contact school@amballet.org.

SOLO PROGRAM

The **Solo Program** gives dancers a chance to hone their skills and gain performance experience at Youth America Grand Prix (YAGP) or other competitive dance programs. Students in the Solo Program meet with a coach for a 30-minute private lesson each Sunday to prepare for the competition, paid on a monthly tuition basis during the competition season (YAGP: August – March; Regional Competitions: August – May). For questions about the Solo Program, please contact school@amballet.org.

SOLO PROGRAM – YAGP

Students ages 9-18 enrolled in the AMB Academy Division have the unique opportunity to participate in the YAGP ballet competition. Students who wish to participate will learn a classical variation and/or a contemporary solo to perform at a YAGP event. Private lessons will begin in September and participants will attend a YAGP event in February or March chosen by AMB. Students interested in participating in YAGP should visit yagp.org.

Class Requirements:

- **Students ages 9-10** must be enrolled in 1 ballet class and 1 modern/contemporary class at AMB School for the entire school year.
- **Students ages 11-18** must be enrolled in 2 ballet classes, 1 pointe or pre-pointe class, and 1 modern/contemporary class at AMB School for the entire school year.

Students interested in participating should email school@amballet.org no later than July 1.

SOLO PROGRAM – REGIONAL COMPETITIONS

Registered AMB students ages 6-18 are eligible to participate in this program through **competitive solos, duets, or trios**. Participants will prepare choreographed routines to be performed at regional dance competitions. Dancers will select which competitions they wish to participate in from an AMB provided list.

Class Requirements:

- **Students age 6** must be enrolled in 1 dance class at AMB School for the entire school year.
- **Students ages 7-10** must be enrolled in 1 ballet class, 1 jazz class, and 1 lyrical or modern/contemporary class at AMB School for the entire school year.
- **Students ages 11-18** must be enrolled in 2 ballet classes, 1 jazz class, and 1 lyrical or modern/contemporary class at AMB School for the entire school year.

Students interested in participating should email school@amballet.org no later than July 1.

SOLO PROGRAM FEES	
Participation Fee – due upon enrollment	\$150 first dance \$50 each additional dance
Choreography Fee – due prior to first rehearsal	\$260 per dance
Monthly Private Lesson Tuition – due the first of each month during competition season	\$130 = 2 hours / \$260 = 4 hours per month per dance
Competition Entry Fee: YAGP	Paid to YAGP
Competition Entry Fee: Regional Competitions – due by December 1	TBD
Costumes	Paid by participant
Personal Travel Expenses	Paid by participant
Instructor Travel – divided among participants	TBD

PRIVATE LESSONS

Registered AMB students are eligible for private lessons (1-3 students and an AMB School instructor). A student wishing to take private lessons with an AMB School instructor may email kendra@amballet.org to make arrangements.

Private Lesson Fee: \$35 (30-minute lesson). Payment must be made to the office prior to the lesson.

Cancellation by the student without 24-hour notice requires full payment (no make-up session provided). To reschedule, contact kendra@amballet.org.

SCHOLARSHIPS

Dance is for everyone! Scholarships are available to remove financial barriers to participation. Scholarships will be granted to students based on the following criteria:

- Students' financial need
- Exclusive enrollment at AMB School
- A dedicated commitment to ongoing dance training through AMB School

For questions, or to request an application, contact the school office at (712) 890-5591 or school@amballet.org.

**Thank you for choosing AMB School.
We look forward to working with you and your dancer!**